

MEMOIRS
OF
THE REVOLUTION;
OR,
AN APOLOGY FOR MY CONDUCT,
IN
*THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENTS WHICH
I HAVE HELD.*

BY D. J. GARAT;
LATE MINISTER OF JUSTICE; MINISTER FOR THE HOME-DEPARTMENT;
COMMISSARY OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, &c.—IN THE
SERVICE OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
By R. HERON.

Edinburgh:
PRINTED FOR G. MUDIE AND SON.

1797.

MEMOIR

OF

THE REVOLUTION

ADVERTISEMENT

OR

AN APOLOGY FOR MY CONDUCT

IN

THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENTS WHICH

I HAVE HELD

BY D. J. GARAT

LATE MINISTER OF JUSTICE; MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL CONVENT;
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, &c. &c. IN THE
REVOLUTION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.



BY R. HERON

Edinburgh:

PRINTED FOR G. WILKIE AND SON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THAT very day, on which Philip Dumont accused me to the Convention ; I presented myself before the Committee of General Security. Three days after, I obtained a hearing. I had reason to suppose, that some members of the Committee were favourably, others unfavourably, predisposed towards me. When I had ended speaking, they were all alike impressed with the force and truth of my defence.—I perceived, that the reign of justice was beginning to be renewed among us.

I was requested to commit to writing, what I had said. I wrote the work which I now present to the Convention, to the nation, and to posterity.

It has been impossible for me to detach *myself* from events. My wish was to write only a memoir ; I have produced almost a history.

This is perhaps the first time that the history of an absolute power has been written in the reign, and under the eye of that power.—I have written without
fear ;

fear ; I have yet to learn, whether it were without danger.

Here will be found much detail.—Voltaire says, that contemporaries are greedy of detail.—I shall add, that even posterity stand in need of it, in order that they may rightly understand the results.

While in the ministry, I was earnestly occupied in calming the passions. Since, after so terribly ravaging social life, they begin to subside, because their strength is exhausted ; it would ill have become me to write in such a manner as to renew their rage.

From the whole tenor of this composition, there results a grand truth, highly honourable to the Convention, and highly consolatory to the Nation ;—*That amidst such infuriated passions, and deeds so atrociously criminal, while every engine and every artifice of corruption has been employed among us, by all the powers of Europe ; yet, there has not been a man gained to treason, out of eight hundred representatives of the people.*

We shall astonish future times by the horrors which the history of our era will display : We shall astonish them no less by the giant-majesty of our virtues.—The unparalleled contrast between our principles and our errors, will be absolutely incomprehensible to all who have not studied the philosophy of the human mind.—With fewer virtues, and a more accurate logic, we might have eschewed almost all our crimes, and all the disasters which they have brought upon us ; it was almost always the absurd, that hurried us into the horrible.

Just

Just as I finished the printing of this work, the Memoirs of Madame Roland appeared. I have avoided reading them. I was afraid that they might oblige me to throw out reproaches against the memory of a woman whose death has consecrated the transactions of her life.—The time will, no doubt, come, when truth shall descend unveiled amongst us, to judge both the living and the dead. I allow myself to add but one word here. At least two or three of the friends of Madame Roland knew, that while she *wrote* against me, I was *acting* for her. She herself knew as much.

Several Answers to this work have been already announced. Even before seeing it, the resolution has been taken to refute it. The more they write, so much the more will the truth be displayed in full detail, and in all its lustre. The being thus in readiness to write, is an engagement not to proscribe.

Some say that the impression of this pamphlet costs me twenty thousand livres. Others say that it brings me twenty thousand.—It costs me nothing ; and I receive nothing for it. I have given the manuscript in a present to J. J. Smits.

Just as I finished the printing of this work, the
Memoirs of Madame Roland appeared. I have
avoided reading them. I was afraid that they might
oblige me to throw out reproaches against the me-
mory of a woman whose death has costared the
translations of her life. The time will, no doubt,
come, when truth shall descend unveiled amongst
us to judge both the living and the dead. I allow
myself to add but one word here. At least two or
three of the friends of Madame Roland know that
while the work against me, I was acting for her. She
herself knew as much.

Several Answers to this work have been already an-
nounced. Given before issuing it, the resolution has
been taken to refute it. The more they write, to much
the more will the truth be displayed in full detail,
and in all its lustre. The being thus in readiness to
write, is an engagement not to be broken.

Some say that the impression of this pamphlet costs
me twenty thousand livres. Others say that it brings
me twenty thousand. It costs me nothing, and I re-
ceive nothing for it. I have given the manuscript to
a printer to J. J. [unclear]



C O N T E N T S.

<i>GARAT's Accusation by Dumont,</i>	-	Page 1
<i>Garat, a Man of Letters,—a Member of the Consti-</i>		
<i>tuent Assembly, &c.</i>	- - -	2
<i>Made Minister by the Brissotines,</i>	- -	6
<i>Accused of having defended the Massacres of the 2d</i>		
<i>and 3d of September,</i>	- -	10
<i>That Accusation refuted,</i>	- -	33
<i>Beautiful Apostrophe to Condorcet,</i>	- -	49
<i>Did not defend the Pillage and Mob of February,</i>		52
<i>Character of the two Sides of the Convention,</i>		58
<i>Character of Robespierre and Salles,</i>	-	65
<i>Conversation with Robespierre,</i>	- -	69
<i>Garat's Endeavours to reconcile the Mountain and</i>		
<i>the Brissotines,</i>	- - -	110
<i>Arrestment of the Brissotines on the 2d of June,</i>		178
<i>Insurrection of the Departments,</i>	- -	199
<i>Garat accused by Collot D' Herbois,</i>	-	218
<i>Character and Views of Danton,</i>	- -	234
<i>Account of Garat's Private Fortune and Plan of Life,</i>		262

CONTENTS

179	GARRAT: Accusation by Danton.
180	Garrat, a Man of Letters:—an Member of the Constituent Assembly, &c.
181	Made his first appearance by the Bastille.
182	Accused of having defended the Members of the 2d and 3d of September.
183	That Accusation refuted.
184	Beautiful Epigram on Garrat.
185	Did not defend the Village and Mass of February.
186	Character of the two Sides of the Convention.
187	Character of Robespierre and others.
188	Conversation with Robespierre.
189	Garrat: Endeavour to reconcile the Mountain and the Bassins.
190	Arrignment of the Bassins on the 2d of June.
191	Insurrection of the Departments.
192	Garrat accused by Collot D'Herbois.
193	Character and Views of Danton.
194	Account of Garrat's Private Fortune and Part of Life.

ACCOUNT OF MY CONDUCT
IN
THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC
AFFAIRS.

HUMILIS res est stultitia, abjecta, sordida, servilis, multis affectibus et SÆVISSIMIS subiecta. Hos tam graves dominos, interdum alternis imperantes, interdum pariter, dimittit a te sapientia; quæ sola libertas est. Una ad hanc fert via, et quidem recta. Non aberrabis; vade certo gradu. Si vis tibi omnia subicere, te subijce Rationi.

A MIND unsteady, and unenlightened by sound reason, is necessarily low, mean, base, servile, and subject to a multitude of cruelly imperious passions. From the tyranny of these passions, which sometimes lord it over one another, and sometimes with consenting influence, exercise their impotent sway over the better part of the mind,—TRUE WISDOM alone, can set us free: And to be thus free, is the *only* GENUINE LIBERTY we can know. There is but one straight road to this. March steadily onward; and you cannot go astray. Would you subject all other things to yourself? Then, first subject yourself to REASON.

I HAVE no personal acquaintance with Philip Dumont, the Representative of the People, by whom I was *denounced* to the National Convention, at their meeting on the 19th day of *Wind-Month* (March 9. 1795). His *denunciation* is to me a proof, that he has much less knowledge of me. I might there-

fore reasonably reproach him with want of candour : I shall, however, offer him nothing but thanks, the sincerest thanks. When heinous and absurd calumnies are universally circulated, by men so notoriously base, that to reply to them were infamy ; thanks are then due to any man of respectable character, who, being so far imposed upon by those calumnies, as to adopt and repeat them in formal accusation ; so dignifies them, by making them his own, that the person accused may enter upon his defence without dishonour.

In a revolution in which there have been so many successive revolutions, a person might well be free from guilt, and yet be unable to produce decisive proofs of innocence. I can evince my innocence by a thousand proofs ; some of which I have preserved at the risk of my life,—by exposing myself more nearly than before, to that stroke of death which long hung over my head.

Before the Revolution, I was known to the Public, in the character of a MAN OF LETTERS. During the Revolution, I have been A Member of the *Constituent Assembly* ; Minister of Justice and of Internal Affairs ; Commissary of Public Instruction.

Our *Men of Letters* have not all perished. I call upon those who yet survive, to testify what was the tenor of my literary life. I spent it almost wholly in the country, far from contention and cabal, in the unremitting prosecution of those studies in which I delighted. Although, perhaps, not without some claim to the usual distinctions and rewards of literary merit ;
yet



yet I belonged to no academy, I enjoyed no pension.

In the *Constituent Assembly*, I rarely appeared as a *speaker*; but I was, at the same time, a daily *writer* in the *Paris Journal*. That paper, while I wrote in it, had a multitude of violent enemies. But all who were enemies to it, were hostile to the Revolution. Me, those men will never forgive. They may be reconciled to such writers, as with a prudential discretion in their moral conduct and opinions, have discovered only contracted views of the nature of liberty: They may find in their hearts, an excuse for writers who have trumpeted forth *Equality*, with a degree of extravagance, that has proved fatal to it: But they never will pardon him, who, with perfect sanctity of moral action and sentiment, has taught the most enlarged principles of Liberty and Equality.

In the *Constituent Assembly*, I was never president, secretary, nor member of any committee. It was allowed, that I wanted not abilities and information: It may therefore be inferred, that I should not have gone without one or another of those envied distinctions, if I had not wanted ambition, and avoided intermeddling in intrigue.

When I ceased to be a member of the National Assembly, I at the same time ceased from writing the *Paris Journal*. The choice of a successor in the *Journal*, was left to myself; and I named Condorcet. I well knew, that he would greatly surpass my abilities, as a writer: But I knew also, that he would maintain and propagate the principles which I had advanced:

In the month of April, in the year 1792, I went to England, in the train of our ambassador. Being an *Ex-constituent*, I could not then sustain any public character. I, however, performed some services, for which I refused all salary.

It was at the commencement of the war, when France, on all hands betrayed, seemed to be already cut off from every prospect of success. With the news of the misfortunes of our armies, there was circulated at London, a proclamation by the governors of Belgium, in which the principles and events of our Revolution, were shockingly misrepresented; yet in so artful a manner, as to impose easily upon persons who are inclined to judge of a Revolution, more by its immediate effects, than by those which it promises, at a due distance of time, to produce. To that proclamation, I wrote an answer. My manuscript was translated into English; and the translation printed. Upon my return to France, in the month of June, I had the original printed at Paris. It had extraordinary success both in England and France; which I now remember with pleasure, not so much because the piece was mine, as because it was useful to my country.

In the month of September following, when the electors of France, were to nominate new representatives; Louvet, who by his paper called *The Centinel*, had for some time exercised an happy influence upon public opinion, inserted my name among the names of a few patriots whom he recommended to the choice of the electors of Paris. Marat, who then posted up, on every conspicuous place in the city, hand-bills ex-
citing

citing the people to massacre ; in reply to Louvet, stigmatized me as a ROYALIST IN DISGUISE. It is well known, how terrible, and how surely executed, Marat's edicts of proscription then were. I made no acknowledgements to Louvet, with the expression of whose esteem, my heart was, nevertheless, sensibly affected : To Marat, I made no reply, as he might easily procure me to be assassinated, although he could not injure my character.

For two or three years before this period, my studies had been occasionally employed upon—the *Art of constructing society* ; the *Representative system* ; the *Best form for a republican government among a great people*. My peculiar views of these subjects, appeared to me of some importance ; being the results of long and earnest study, and of strict analytical investigation. I thought them new and true ; and I was sure, that they were my own. After the 10th of August, all that I desired in the world, was leisure in retirement, to arrange those ideas into a system, and to write them out, that I might then submit them to be considered by the nation and its representatives. But, to a man without fortune, the most difficult of all things is retirement. He is obliged to live on in the world ; because he cannot otherwise make provision for the passing day. No misfortune has ever more grievously oppressed my heart with despair, than bitterest of all sentiments, which totally unnerves the energies of the mind, and makes a blank of all its faculties. I opened my mind to Condorcet, who had access to the *Committees of Government*, and to the *Exe-*

cutive Council. Condorcet applied himself to procure me some commission in the public service, that might afford me leisure for the perfection of my plan. In the mean time, I accepted the care of compiling the article, *Convention*, in the *National Gazette*. The accounts which it contained of the first *sessions* of the Convention, were written by me. And, if any person shall now please to examine them, he will find, that I wrote of things and of men, with that independence of mind, and that scrupulous regard to veracity, which never fail to gain a person bitter enemies, and to make his friends, cold and indifferent.

On the 9th of October, I was nominated *Minister of Justice*. I owed my appointment to that place, chiefly to Condorcet, Rabaut de St Etienne, and Brissot.

It was to me, a real misfortune, to be thus obliged to forego my hopes of retirement to solitary study. But I have ever thought, that an honest citizen has no right to make his own terms with the republic ; but ought to serve as she pleases, not as he chuses : And that, to refuse a public employment, unless one feel one's self unfit for it, is a cowardly desertion of the post of a citizen. I therefore devoted myself to official duties, which were adverse to all my favourite inclinations, which broke through all my accustomed habits of life, and which interrupted the secret converse of my mind with itself. I was thus exposed to be hurried along in that tempest of passions, of which I had resolved to be rather the victim than the engine. I felt my intrepidity exalted by this conscious exertion
of

of it ; but, my heart was, at the same time, not free from some melancholy presages of the future. Accepting the place of *Minister*, I gave up every thing that was dear to me : And during more than ten months, while I was employed in public affairs, I did not read so much as ten pages of a book, I did not write ten lines, that related not to public events, and my official duties.

I had paid too much attention to what was passing on the great stage of public business, not to discern, that a grand trial of strength, was about to take place between the two sides of the National Convention. I was too well acquainted with the character of party-spirit, as it is exhibited in the history of republics ancient and modern, not to know, that parties seeking each other's overthrow, are accustomed to accuse one another of perfidy to the commonwealth. I knew, that such accusations, though false, generally obtain credit ; that dislike is usually generated by difference in opinion ; suspicion of guilt, by dislike ; guilt itself, by the malignity of suspicion. Taught by the spirit of my studies, to regard every thing as doubtful, that was not demonstrated by the evidence of unquestionable facts ; and holding the office of *Minister of Justice* ; I vowed in my heart, to poise the balance in my hands, with unbiaſſed equity, and rather to die, than suffer prejudice or passion to incline it to either side.

Here, however, I cannot help acknowledging one truth, which, after the events that have since happened, and the clamours raised against me, will exceedingly

surprise some people, yet will so surprise none but those to whom I am utterly unknown.

Had I *been* disposed to favour one side of the Convention more than the other, it was the *right side* that would have had my partiality. Many of the members belonging to that side, were my acquaintance and friends. On the *left side* of the house, I had not one friend, and but few of my acquaintance. The political opinions, the characters, the language of the members on the *right side*, were, besides, much more congenial to my character, my opinions, and my language, than those of their opponents. I saw not a single individual among them, for whom I had the slightest dislike, or of whom I could suppose that he had any dislike to me. On the *left side*, I saw many whom I could not view without aversion and horror; and who could not behold me without uneasiness.

Such were my private REGARDS: But private REGARD is not to regulate the conduct of a man in public employment.

I was persuaded, that on the *left side*, there was an incomparably greater number of upright, well-meaning citizens, than of bad men; that, even those who breathed nothing but fury, the most frantic, and the most dangerous to the Republic, conceived their fury to be essentially serviceable to the common-weal; that there might be some dark and bloody-minded men, but there was not one traitor among them; that the passions of such men were rather to be soothed, than exasperated. Soothing them, in the mean time; we might thus await, as it appeared to me, the proper season

season when a wise constitution, and a vigorous government should, hereafter, afford due means for curbing them. By irritating them, we should only imitate their licentious example, add to their influence, and their extravagance, and thus retard, or lose for ever, the happy moment for the institution of a form of government, at once wise and great; a government, such as might, with all the powers of the Republic, protect the security of individuals, and the liberty of the nation, equally against the intrigues of ambitious demagogues, and the turbulent fury of the multitude. It appeared to me, that party-spirit was much less dangerous to the public interests, in the National Representatives, than in a Minister; because the opinions of the Representative, find opposite opinions and passions to clash and contend with them; but executive force meets with no opposing force, to resist and disarm its violence.

These were the dispositions of mind, in respect to party, which I uniformly discovered in the National Convention, whenever I was favoured there with permission to deliver my sentiments. That favour I deserved from both sides, equally; because my opinions were alike impartial to both; and because, amid that tumult of passions which threatened the ruin of the Republic and of France, I was heartily persuaded, that the most passionate and the most general sentiment, among men of all parties, was love, enthusiastic love for the commonwealth.

The first occasion on which there happened any thing to diminish the common favour of both parties toward

toward me, was, immediately after I had made a speech in the Convention, upon a question that obliged me to review the merits of the transactions of the 2d and 3d days of September. I spoke, amid an uproar of passion, that was naturally excited by the subjects on which I touched. Scarcely could I obtain a hearing to the end of my discourse : what I said was ill understood. The speech was, however, printed by order of the Convention, upon a motion by Ducos ; who, even while I spoke, had fully apprehended my sentiments, with which his own accorded ; and who defended them with the most flattering approbation, against the angry contempt of those who first misinterpreted, and then outrageously exploded them. After it was printed, even they who took it up with prepossessions against it, soon saw and confessed their error. But hatred, and disingenuous malignity took hold of that momentary error, of that false impression caught amid tumultuous uproar : and upon it is founded, even at this day, one of their most atrocious and absurd accusations against me.

They say,—for I am obliged to repeat their calumny—they say that I made an apology for the massacres of the 2d and 3d of September. They say so ! Forgetting that my speech was printed ; and that the whole edition has not been consumed by those flames of persecution which have been maliciously kindled against myself. They say so ! Not considering that I have it in my power, again to submit this misrepresented speech to the examination of all France, and thus to turn against *them*, the abhorrence justly due to every

every apologist of the massacres of the 2d and 3d of September. What an accursed affection is malice! for a few moments of gratification, it scruples not to incur eternal infamy!

Frenchmen! and you, legislators and representatives of France! Consider, that justice done to those who have administered public offices with irreproachable diligence and integrity; and justice executed upon those who have been culprits in public employment; will ever be the surest, nay the only safeguard of legal authority, of public virtue, and of all the blessings of social life. I wish to submit my conduct to the severest examination of you by whose appointment, and under whose eye I exercised functions of the most important nature. I hear from every quarter, claims of indulgence for the errors of the great days of the Revolution. I know the reasonableness of such indulgence: I am willing to grant it to others; but I claim it not for myself. Let me state the maxims which I desire not to extend with severity to others, but by which I wish my own conduct to be rigorously tried. The law the most deeply engraven in my heart, is that which enjoins the duties of melting humanity, as sacred above all others that are incumbent upon man. We are men, before we can be members of a republic. A republic is excellent for no other reason, but because in it, the rights of humanity are respected, and the heart of man is awakened to feel the sacred emotions of compassion and mercy. If then, upon any pretence whatever; if, under the pretext of care for the Republic and the Revolution; I have ever spoken,

ken,—I do not say, with praise,—but with indifference,—without horror,—of the effusion of human blood ; then let my head fall on the scaffold by the sword of the law ; nay, what I much more dread, let your vengeance pursue me to the grave, and condemn my memory to endless execration.

When I spoke of the transactions of the 2d and 3d days of September, before the representatives of France ; it was more than two months after those massacres had been perpetrated. The legislative assembly had been unable to prevent either those, or the massacres at Versailles ; and had taken no steps toward punishing them. The National Convention which succeeded it, had observed the same silence. The courts of justice remained mute and inactive: The whole nation was, as it were, struck speechless with horror. Through all the rest of Europe, indeed, loud was the cry of indignant shuddering humanity : but the voice of Europe was not then heard in France. Roland alone, in the legislative assembly, and on the 3d of September, had hinted an opinion of disapprobation, but without founding any motion upon it. The horrors of those days of slaughter, seemed to be, with one consent, buried in silence, which, however, could neither hide, nor efface them.

When a national assembly, invested with unlimited power, acted, nevertheless, with such extreme caution ; it was not, surely, for a minister to exercise less. The point, therefore, which I was to discuss in my discourse, was not, could not be ; “ Whether the authors of “ the massacres of the 2d and 3d of September, should
“ be

"be prosecuted to punishment?" Whatever as to that, might be my sentiments as a man, or my opinion as a minister; these I was to confine within my own breast, and to hide in the same silence which was universally observed by others.

But out of the circumstances of those 2d and 3d days of September, there arose a different question; concerning which it was impossible for a *Minister of Justice* to remain silent; and upon which, the National Assembly alone could decide.

In all the prisons, the authors of the massacres, had set at liberty a number of those prisoners whom they did not put to death. Virtue herself, if suspected to have been born in a *castle*, or to have ever ministered at the altar, found no favour in their eyes. But, the robber and the assassin, if there were no other crimes imputed to them, were counted patriots, and were restored to the freedom, and the protection of their country.

A number of these wretches, after suffering for several days and nights, more than the agonies of death, had issued from the prisons, through the midst of blood and slaughter. They were recognized in the streets and public squares: and the Commissary from the Executive power, assistant in the *criminal court for the department of Paris*, wrote to me on this subject, as follows.

"The court are much at a loss to determine, what
 "part they ought to take, in respect to the prisoners
 "who have made their escape from confinement, in
 "consequence of the EVENTS of the 2d and 3d of
 "September

“ September last. Many of them were to have been
 “ brought to trial in the session of this month. Numbers
 “ of them are to be met with, in the streets of Paris.
 “ Ought they to be taken into custody? Are they to
 “ be outlawed for contumacy? Or, is the whole af-
 “ fair to be passed over in silence?”

These were the only questions put to myself; the only questions that I had to offer to the Convention; the only ones, toward the solution of which I had any proposition to make.

And yet, it has been believed, or, however, propagated by those who did not believe it, that I attempted to discuss the question, “ Whether or not the authors
 “ of the massacres of the 2d and 3d days of September, should be prosecuted and punished?”—and, after excusing, and even warmly applauding those massacres; concluded with proposing, that their authors should be allowed to enjoy in peace, the fruits of their crimes.

Concerning this point, no inquiry had been put to me. I could have no pretence for handling it. Yet is this the point which I am said to have discussed with a spirit of atrocious inhumanity and injustice.

Observe the language employed by the commissary, in speaking of what passed on the 2d and 3d days of September. He uses the word *EVENTS*, which is applicable alike to glorious, and to mournful incidents, to virtuous acts, and to deeds of desperate wickedness. He specifies no quality of those *EVENTS* which might, in any degree, indicate his own sentiments of them. This I do not take notice of, in order to throw blame
 upon

upon the commissary. God forbid, I should ! I state it thus particularly, only to evince what was, at that time, the tone of public opinion, concerning transactions to which nobody durst apply a characteristic epithet ; and because what I myself said, will be more justly estimated, when brought into comparison with what others dared not to say.

But, did I utter any thing to shock humanity, in speaking upon those questions, which, as *Minister of Justice*, I was obliged to propose ?

Unfortunately for me, those questions were then new to the public mind. The events which gave rise to them, were unheard-of in the history of mankind. I had no path marked out to guide me, amid those rocks and quicksands of jarring interests, opinions, and passions, through which I was forced to pass. I laid down certain principles. These, not being familiar, happened to give offence.

I shall now state the substance of what I then said.

As it was requisite to take the question respecting the prisoners who had been set at liberty, in the point of view the least favourable for them,—upon the supposition that they were guilty ; I divided them into two classes. In the former, I included all such as might be supposed guilty, only of trivial faults. In the second class, I comprehended those whose crimes might be of a more heinous nature ; such as house-breaking, robbery, murder.

I did not dwell much upon the consideration of what degree of lenity or severity, it might be proper to

shew to the former of these classes. The horrors of the massacres which they had witnessed, and in which they had nearly perished, were a punishment an hundred times more terrible, than any that justice could have inflicted upon them. And since the justice and power of the nation had not availed to save them from sufferings which they had not deserved; the last thing that could now be done for them, was, to pardon them those slighter punishments to which they might before have been justly condemned.

The question concerning the liberated prisoners of the second class, was of more difficult discussion.

To me, the very name of *Assassin*, has ever been so odious and shocking, that, when I came to speak of them, I could say in their favour, nothing in my own name, or as Minister of Justice. A feeling of inward horror, which I could not overcome, suggested to me the idea of making the two classes appear, as it were in the presence of our legislators; and of making them plead, each their cause, in such language as might be best fitted, suitably to the circumstances of their respective guilt, to move in their favour, the compassion, and obtain the mercy of their country. The following words were put into the mouth of the criminals of the second class.

“ Our crime is the most atrocious that man can
 “ commit against man: And to it your laws have
 “ assigned the ultimate punishment of *death*. But
 “ what is it constitutes the punishment of death? Is it
 “ the fatal stroke that cuts the thread of life? No, it
 “ is the tremendous anticipation which musters its
 I “ terrors,

" terrors, which announces, which displays its presence;
 " to the being still glowing with life, and trembling
 " with keen sensation. The pain of death consists alto-
 " gether in its terrors; and its terrors go before it.
 " With the mortal stroke, they vanish all. This pu-
 " nishment we have already suffered. Some of us
 " for hours, others for whole days, have seen our-
 " selves environed with its most tremendous horrors.
 " For several days, we suffered all the agonies of disso-
 " lution. Will you renew them to us? Citizens Legis-
 " lators, there have been, there are even among your-
 " selves, men who think that the punishment of death is
 " too severe, that it makes human nature shrink and
 " suffer too much, ever to be justly inflicted by society.
 " If then the right of pronouncing but for once, the sen-
 " tence of death upon a wretched criminal, be, at best,
 " doubtful; can you, in justice, make us twice under-
 " go all its bitterness? Even under the old establish-
 " ment, of which every law was an insult, and a cala-
 " mity to a great part of the human race; of which the
 " criminal code was, in many instances, ferocious, as if
 " it had been dictated by dæmons; yet, even under that
 " establishment, if it ever happened, that a condemned
 " criminal died not by the execution of his sentence, his
 " life was spared. Law and justice asked nothing more
 " of the man, on whom the executioner had done his
 " part. Altho' surviving, he was regarded, as having
 " suffered death, as beginning life anew, as being, in
 " some sort, another man. Citizens, you are the Legis-
 " lators of a great Republic, and at this moment our
 " judges: Can you condemn us to undergo the ut-

" most rigour of your laws ; WHILE NOT A WORD IS
 " SAID OF THOSE, who, before they set us at liberty,
 " made us endure all the agonies of death ; who dis-
 " missed us from prison through streams of blood,
 " which they shed before our eyes ? No, it is impos-
 " sible, that you should wound justice and humanity,
 " *by exhibiting a contrast, in such direct opposition to their*
 " *laws.* YOU WILL BURY IN OBLIVION, ALL OR NO-
 " THING. Justice herself sometimes requires us to
 " throw a veil over her too piercing eyes. The most
 " virtuous of nations, have set an example of this."

Such was the language of apology and supplication,
 which I put into the mouths of the liberated prisoners of
 this second class. Their petition was founded solely
 on the consideration, that they had already undergone
 pains and penalties fully adequate to their guilt.

While I introduced them speaking for themselves,
 I avoided the necessity of explaining my own private
 judgment upon their case. But I now scruple not to
 avow, that, of the reasons which I made them urge,
 some appeared to me absolutely invincible.

I was then, and I still am, thoroughly persuaded,
 that National Justice owes its inviolable protection to
 all prisoners, however criminal, until the moment at
 which it ordains the execution of the punishment to
 which it condemns them : That where it could not
 protect, it ought to forego its right of punishing :
 That those lives which it could not save from being
 long cruelly menaced by the knife of the assassin,—
 those it ought at least to deliver from the axe of the
 executioner : That, being itself in fault, it should
 make

make some sort of compensation for its weakness, by its mercy.

Far from being ashamed of these sentiments, far from fearing least they disgrace my life, my administration, or my memory; I find a satisfaction in repeating them here, as the best emanations of my purest reason, and of whatever is good and benignant in my heart. Ye just and good men; you who do honour to mankind, by the interest which you take in their welfare; you who reverence humanity and pity, as tender and pious affections! Say, have I pained or offended you by these sentiments, the natural effusions of my heart,—by my proclivity to melting, sympathetic emotion, when I think of the sufferings and sorrows of man upon the earth?

But all extremes are evil. The severities of social order, often originate in its beneficence. And, that compassionate disposition which is the most amiable quality in any private character, may produce very unfortunate effects upon the conduct of a man in public authority.

But, did I consult private affection, in preference to my official duties? Did I seek to exercise milder humanity, than is consistent with the firm impartiality necessary to a Minister of Justice?

Alas! it was not I that was to give the decree for which I applied. Had I even been hurried too far by considerations of humanity, before the Legislators of a great nation; was this an indiscretion of a nature to merit no indulgence from this Nation; and from its Legislators?

Yet even this fault I did not commit.

After making due allowance for what justice seemed to owe, in circumstances so extraordinary, to the claims of nature and humanity ; I paid no less respect to its obligations to maintain the security of social life. The same voice which spoke so powerfully to my heart, in behalf of wretches whose sufferings had been so great,—the sacred voice of humanity—cried to me with yet more impressive accents ; that men whose hands have been once polluted by shedding the blood of their brethren, have, by that act, put off, for as much as in them lay, the very semblance of humanity ; have extinguished the best feelings of nature in their hearts ; and that *the man* has been, in some sort, murdered in the assassin's own breast, as well as in the person who has fallen by his hand. Were it even true, said I to myself, that they had suffered from remorse, enough to bring them back to virtue ; yet, society still shudders at the remembrance of their crime, and cannot descend into the depths of their souls, there to behold the tortures eternally inflicted by the vulture-fangs of that inward tormentor.

Upon this consideration of the public interest, which is the first law of social life, and which demands every sacrifice, because it confers every benefit ; I proposed, although to spare this second class of liberated prisoners from the punishment of death, yet still to subject them to the mitigated sentence of *transportation*.

I, at the same time, offered to submit to the examination of the Committees of the Convention, a new
plan

plan for the *transportation* of criminals who should be condemned to undergo this punishment.

In making this offer, I had two objects in view. One of these was proper to be then made known; and it I explained. It was, to procure such a regulation of the punishment of *transportation*; that one nation might no longer rid itself of its criminals, by transporting them into the midst of other nations; or punish old crimes by the commission of new.

My other purpose I wished to keep secret. It was confined to my own breast, which it cheered with a dear, though silent hope.

At the very moment of its origin, I saw the French Republic threatened with that party-spirit, and those collisions of rival factions, by which all republics have ever been internally wasted, and polluted with their own blood. But I was of opinion, that, if a great and skilful plan for punishment by *transportation* could be previously established; the victors in our party-contests, might be induced to content themselves with the *transportation* of their vanquished opponents; that the striking uncertainty of political fortune, might hinder our wars of opinion from being always pursued to bloodshed; that the blood streaming on our scaffolds would not continue to excite, from generation to generation, an unquenchable thirst of blood; that, from among those moral storms, which generate energy and elevation of soul, we might remove the sufferings and dangers that produce a savage darkness and ferocity of spirit; that, humanity thus respected, even amid the fury of party-hatreds, might hence be-

come the most habitual and inextinguishable sentiment in the heart of every citizen of France. Alas! these were my fond hopes and views; what followed, we all know.

Had I been invested with the character of a Legislator, I should perhaps have proposed and discussed different questions. As Minister of Justice, I was obliged to confine myself to these two, of which I have here reviewed the discussion. I even evaded, with care, those other subjects of examination, which, in every part of my discourse, pressed themselves upon my notice.

I may, however, observe, that once, and once only, and this in that part of my speech in which I introduced the liberated prisoners speaking for themselves, and pleading not the cause of the Public, but their own; I put into their mouths, some words alluding to the general silence which had been observed with respect to the perpetrators of the massacres. Let the reader again cast his eye upon those words! They are printed in *Italic characters*. Whether do they seem to bespeak my approbation, or my shrinking abhorrence of those massacres?

I observe farther, that after putting into the mouths of the liberated prisoners, these words; *YOU WILL BURY ALL IN OBLIVION, ALL, OR NOTHING*; I proceeded to suggest in my own name, that *all should not be buried in oblivion*; but that the second class of the liberated prisoners should *suffer the punishment of transportation*. And this proposal I founded upon a persuasion, that society could never deem itself perfectly

fectly secure, while it retained in its bosom, men who had perpetrated such enormous crimes.

Since, then, keeping in view the two alternatives proposed in name of those prisoners ; I asked, however, no complete amnesty for them : It is natural to infer, that I wished not an amnesty to the savage guilt of the wretches who had set *them* at liberty, after making them undergo the agonies of a thousand deaths. Since I judged that, for only one murder, already expiated by such length of suffering ; still the punishment of *transportation* ought to be inflicted : can it be imagined, that I should desire indulgence and mercy to assassins who had employed several days and nights successively in the butchery of the uncondemned, and had not as yet been visited even with the fear of punishment ? If my heart earnestly re-echoed the voice of all Nature, crying aloud, that the man who has even once, with murderous hand, shed the blood of man, must ever after be, to the society within which he has perpetrated this crime, an object of horror and distrust : How, then, was it possible to avoid believing, that I regarded with no less horror and aversion, a band of monsters, whose hands had been polluted with such a profusion of innocent blood ?

These consequences were all too direct and obvious, not to occur forcibly to the hearers of my speech. I was forbidden to speak. Yet, I had said enough to make my sentiments sufficiently understood by all who did not obstinately misapprehend them.

It was in vain. What I truly thought, and what was so clearly implied in the language of my speech ; that

they would not understand. From my words they strove to draw inferences, forced and false, wholly foreign to my intentions, and formally contradicted by the tenor of what I advanced.

Already, the attentive reader of this narrative, may have found in it, more than once, matter for surprise. But his mind will be moved by what immediately follows, to a degree of astonishment from which he will not easily recover it.

Those massacres, perpetrated in the midst of a great city, of a people immensely numerous, of a multitude of *Constituted Authorities*, had been represented by me, as arising unavoidably from the tumults, the disturbances, the convulsions of society, which are ever inseparable from a great insurrection. And it was hence concluded, that, having highly praised *the insurrection*, I must, of course, mean to extend the same praise to the massacres.

It is easy to encounter and refute such egregious absurdities. But, it is inexpressibly painful to be compelled to justify one's self against imputations so false, of guilt so atrocious. Is this my reward for all the good I sought to do, for the little which I was so fortunate, as actually to accomplish?

But here, at least, my own personal defence must be connected with grand objects, and important interests; with the necessary illustration of the circumstances of an æra, at once the most glorious, and the most disgraceful in the whole revolution; with the no less necessary discussion of the exercise of the *right of insurrection*; with the defence of the conduct of the magistrates

gistrates of Paris, and the legislators of France, at that period ; with the defence of the French Nation, cited as they are by the voice of humanity, to justify their conduct upon that memorable occasion, at the awful bar of all nations, and of all future times.

It has been denied, that the massacres of the 2d and 3d of September, were a consequence of *the insurrection* on the 10th of August ! But, those who have thus endeavoured to justify an *insurrection* which needs no such apology, seem not to have been aware, that their attempt tends to brand the whole French nation with indelible disgrace, in the eyes of all mankind. For the French nation have never yet punished those crimes of unspeakable atrocity ; have never yet demanded the punishment either of the authors of the massacres, or of those dastardly magistrates and legislators, who did not, ALL, hasten at the first alarm, to the scenes of the massacres, to prevent them, or perish the first by the hands of the assassins.

But, setting aside all deductions of reasoning, and all evidence, merely presumptive ; the fact which I have alledged, carries its proof within itself, and through all its circumstances.

At what period had the prisons been filled with those crowds of victims, which they were scarcely sufficient to contain ? It was after the 10th of August, and on the first days of the insurrection. Arrests were then executed in all quarters ; in the houses, streets, squares, gardens. The hackney-coaches, and the soldiers at the command of the officers of justice, were too few for the purpose of taking all the persons arrested

rested into custody, and of conveying them to the prisons. By whom were the orders for all these thousands of arrests issued and signed? By municipal officers, whom the *insurrection* had first invested with power, who had been raised by it from the *Sections*, into the *Community*. Against whom were those orders of arrest principally directed? Against whom was the intention held forth, of directing them exclusively? Against those who were accused, justly or unjustly, of having been partizans of the *Castle*, of being enemies to that republican government which was about to be exalted upon the ruins of the throne. Who were the most eagerly sought out in the prisons, and the most industriously selected to perish by the murderous weapons of the assassins? Priests and nobles, the same men who had been arrested on the first days of the insurrection, and on the days immediately subsequent to it. Lastly, who has been accused or suspected of having formed the first design of the bloody transactions of those execrable days? of having whetted the knives, of having armed the hands of the assassins? of having given the signal, of having protected and rewarded the execution? Some of those same municipal officers who had concurred in exciting the insurrections, and who, by the *insurrection*, had earned the scarf and the sword. Marat especially, whose concern in the massacres has been proved; whose very name is alone, almost proof sufficient. He it was, that monster of depravity, who, having been born in meanness, and aspiring to become the first in every thing, made himself the leader in all atrocious crimes:

He it was, who first, and for a long while alone, preached murder and assassination, as needful engines of revolution : He it was, who has been an evil genius to France, ever since it recovered its freedom. And yet, O despair ! O night of human intelligence ! for some moments, he was adored. Amid such perversion of reason and moral sentiment, no crimes could be too atrocious, to be purposed, approved, and imitated.

The fact which I have related, is therefore certain. It is self-evident. Every thing concurs to evince its reality. And this fact, alone, may serve to satisfy the generation that witnessed it, the future generations to which it shall be told ;—in what manner a wound so severe, could be inflicted on humanity ; in the midst of a people among whom the light of moral knowledge was not wholly extinguished ; from whose bosoms all the sympathies of pity were not entirely eradicated ; whose souls were not yet universally enslaved by terror ; who had upright and active magistrates, with an armed force under their command ; who had enlightened legislators speaking a bold and lofty language, in a senate-house sacred to liberty and to law.

Petion was Mayor ; Manuel was Agent for the *Community*. I knew them both. Manuel was far from being a man of savage cruelty of disposition : Petion's heart was kind and humane. With them, in the hall of the *Community*, sat a number of other men, who, as well as they, had a due aversion and horror for the shedding of human blood ; who thought, as well

well as they, that despotism and aristocracy were to be pulled down, but that to butcher despots and *aristocrats* in prison, was intolerably shocking to the common feelings of humanity. In those days, ever to be lamented by Liberty, there was an Executive Council that met, or ought to have met. The *insurrection* hurled the King from his throne, but dared not to attack the Legislative Assembly; which still held its usual *sessions*. While the Assembly was sitting, notice was brought; *There HAS BEEN a massacre in the prisons*: again, *there is a massacre in the prisons*: afterwards, *there IS GOING TO BE a massacre in the prisons*. How came it, then, that the Legislative Assembly, the Executive Council, the Mayor, and the Agent for the *Community*? How came it, that every one vested with authority, and not destitute of humanity,—did not interfere, to stay that effusion of blood, which was murderously shed for two days in succession, and almost in the face of the whole world? They all wished to prevent, to stay it; they all attempted. Were they, then, unable? But, how, by whom, by what means, were the representatives of the National Power, the officers of the laws, the trustees of the public force, the *constituted authorities*, all at once reduced to such a fatal incapacity of exertion? Or, is this to be otherwise accounted for, than by the *insurrection*; which, while it aimed a just and necessary blow *at a perfidious and guilty authority*; rose, for the moment, above the controul of the purest and most *faithful authorities*; and then, for some time longer, usurped that power which it ought to have held but
for

for a moment, and for the execution of a single act? How otherwise shall we account for it, than by reflecting, that, among the contrivers and leaders of the *insurrection*, were some of those men, who accomplish all, because they dare all; who, while they vindicated the liberties of the nation, imagined, that they had acquired a right to give a loose to their own most ferocious passions? How shall we account for the massacre at Versailles, which took place, several days after those in Paris, with similar circumstances, and in a manner equally public, otherwise than by acknowledging, that, the legislators, the ministers, the magistrates of the nation, had not yet recovered a firm grasp of the reins of government; but that *insurrection*, in its fury, still swayed the headlong course of events? How, otherwise, were it possible to account for the universal silence concerning those days of massacre, which so long prevailed, amid universal horror; for the timidity and frigid caution, which even men of the utmost purity of intention, and humanity of disposition, have shewn, whenever they have ventured to blame them; for that loud applause with which they were extolled by men, whose hearts were not cruel, or their actions nefarious, but who were transported with extravagant enthusiasm, and coined new words to celebrate deeds till then unheard of.

But, our declarations of right, it is said, our laws, our books, ever since the year 1789, represent *insurrection*, as a thing *sacred*. True; but, what then? Does it follow, that I must regard all the effects which

I have ascribed to the *insurrection*, to be as lawful as it, and as sacred? An inference so horrible ought not to be rashly imputed to me, unless I had myself openly and formally deduced and expressed it. It is far from following necessarily from the use of the word INSURRECTION, or from the meaning which this word naturally bears. If to this word there be affixed ideas different from those which I use it to signify; ideas which in propriety ought not to be affixed to it: what remains for me, but, with all the upright and the good, deeply to lament that dreadful abuse of all the terms in language, by which they are continually perverted to excite and to justify crimes?

That act is *sacred*, which levels from his unlawful eminence, the oppressor of a people, and the usurper of their rights. INSURRECTION is sacred, too, when it does but this, and nothing more.

But, this is not the only act, to which the name of INSURRECTION has been given.

INSURRECTION is said to be any popular commotion, by which a whole people, or a part ACTING FOR THE WHOLE, make resistance to the established powers of government; these powers having violated their engagements, and overstepped the boundaries by law prescribed to them. Its object may be to obtain from these powers, compensations for the past; and new and stronger securities for the future: It may be to subvert and wholly alter them. In every case, all that is done to obtain either of these ends; and all the time that passes between the moment at which the resistance commences, and the period when the *insurgents*

gents profess their submission to the *New powers*; are to be considered, as belonging properly to the INSURRECTION.

Insurrection, therefore, appears to be, in its nature, a violent crisis; the duration of which, may, however, be for a longer or a shorter time. When lawful, it punishes usurpation or violation: but it even then assumes, itself, by violence, the exercise of an irregular and unbounded power. While recovering all rights, it imposes silence on all laws: Punishing the abuses of public authority; it, in the mean time, emancipates all the passions from the due restraints of that authority: Unless a nation be extremely simple in its manners, unless it have deep-rooted habits of tranquil and orderly conduct; its periods of *insurrection* for the punishment of extraordinary crimes, will be inevitably marked also by the commission of extraordinary crimes.

The END of legal *insurrection*, is sacred. But seldom are the MEANS it employs, VERY PURE. And when its tumultuous action is too long continued, guilty deeds almost always fill up a part of the space.

Brutus, after striking Cæsar with one mortal wound, threw away his dagger. The other conspirators continued, with insatiate rage, to mangle the fallen tyrant. Brutus was then thought a weak man. But, his name, alone, has been celebrated in every succeeding age, with fondness and respect. If he failed to restore liberty to his country, then unworthy of the blessing; he has, however, become, by that act, the

the creator, the guardian genius of liberty to all nations, whom the slavery of vice hath not bowed, to crouch, with ready submission, beneath the yoke of tyrants.

Such were always my sentiments concerning *insurrection*. Are these the sentiments of a man who thinks every thing lawful, that *insurrection* can perpetrate? Only malice and calumny would attribute the belief of such a doctrine to any man, unless he had made open and express profession of it. And what must the world think of the malice that pursues me; if it shall appear, that in the very same discourse, in which this doctrine is said to be found, I unequivocally avowed a doctrine directly contrary? I need but to quote my own words: that discourse affords my best apology. The following are the words in which I represented the massacres of the 2d and 3d of September, as owing to the continuance of the *insurrectional* commotions of the 10th of August.

“ If these SHOCKING EVENTS have not been produced by the *insurrection*; why then were they not prevented? why was their progress not stayed? why have they NOT YET BEEN PUNISHED? why has there been such a profusion of blood shed by other hands, than those of the executioners of the law; while the legislators, the magistrates, the people themselves, looked on, without calling out the public force, to seize the murderers, and stay the carnage?”

Observe, how I express myself in an advertisement,
 1 which

which was printed at the same time with the discourse.

“ Altho’ I attribute to the *insurrection*, the massacres
 “ of the 2d and 3d of September ; yet I am far from
 “ seeking to extenuate the guilt of such ENORMOUS
 “ CRIMES. What is good, and WHAT IS HORRIBLE,
 “ may happen together, at the same time ; and the
 “ massacres have taken place, because the commotions
 “ of the *insurrection* had not ceased. What are we to
 “ think of a nation, in the midst of which, SUCH
 “ THINGS could pass, while the laws seemed to be still
 “ in force ? Let these things be seriously weighed ; and
 “ let those whom it may concern, make answer to this
 “ question.”

Besides, in the course of the speech itself ; as if I had foreseen, that I was soon to be attacked by calumny inflamed to phrenzy ; and soon to be accused of having maintained, that, in an *insurrection*, there could be no crime committed, or that all the crimes of an *insurrection*, were by its merits, necessarily consecrated, and transformed into acts of exalted virtue ; as if I had foreseen all this ; I had the caution to express myself on this subject, in the following words, which the reader will find it difficult to believe to have been ever uttered by me ; if he shall bring them into comparison with those barbarous maxims, which monsters of barbarity, have ascribed to a man whose life has been spent in cultivating the most benign affections, and the purest philosophy.

These are the very words.

“ But, even in those *insurrections*, there may have
 C “ been

“ been CRIMES committed, the example and conse-
 “ quences of which, may be pregnant with SUCH DAN-
 “ GERS to social order ; that a nation can neither shut
 “ its eyes on the *crimes*, nor refuse to employ precau-
 “ tions against the *dangers* which they threaten. Some
 “ laws arise so necessarily from the first principles of
 “ human nature, that their obligation is universally
 “ acknowledged, in cities and in forests, in peace and
 “ in war, under legal government, and amid INSUR-
 “ RECTION.”

Is this language not positive and precise ? Is it not clear and distinct ? Is it not perfectly inconsistent with those nefarious sentiments of which I have been accused ?

We have not yet exhausted our matter for astonishment. In ordinary cases, once, twice we may be astonished ; but, after the third time, the events commonly lose their power to amaze. It is a fugitive impression, transient as powerful. But, here, the contrast between what I actually said, and what I am represented to have said, is so extraordinary, that, at each successive step, while we pursue it in detail, new wonder unavoidably rises upon us. What follows, will shew, whether or not, I say truth.

In consideration of all the circumstances of the time, and of my own particular situation, I had carefully avoided treating of, or even touching upon, the subject of the prosecution of the authors of the massacres. But, I was obliged to recal to remembrance, and to bring back into view, those days of blood which I should have wished to efface for ever, for as much as
 in

in me lay, from among the events of a revolution, upon which I had always founded the fondest hopes of the advancement of the general happiness of mankind. And, hard indeed must have been the heart that could review, without emotion, the events of those days; and stern that fortitude of soul which could forbear from all expression of the emotions which were thus excited in it! An insensibility of heart, and a fortitude of spirit, neither of which had fallen to my lot.

In my speech, I did not barely allude to those days: I actually described them. Others had thrown over them, a veil of concealment. That veil I withdrew.

In the narrative of any event, it is a well-known art, even with those destitute of genius; with persons void of art, it is even a natural instinct; to select such circumstances, as are the most proper for accomplishing the desired effect; to pass over, or to extenuate those which might tend to counteract that effect; and to display in the strongest lights, those of the circumstances selected, which are the best adapted to promote it. You in whose hearts the master-sentiment is humanity, which ought to be the first virtue of all mankind; read, and say, whether my soul, when it conceived the following description of those massacres, was not in unison with yours! say, whether the horror with which you read the description, be for the massacres of which it speaks, or for me, the relater!

“ IT WERE HORRIBLY PAINFUL, to recal those
 “ transactions to your remembrance and to my own;
 “ you, citizens-legislators, would not suffer, nor

“ should I attempt it ; did it not appear necessary to
 “ enable us to come to a decision respecting a grand
 “ act of national justice. Of a sudden, while the ring-
 “ ing of bells, and the firing of guns, spreading a ge-
 “ neral alarm of danger, roused all to meet it with
 “ courage,—in those moments, an assault was made on
 “ the prisons. The doors were opened, not by vio-
 “ lence, but voluntarily. Men who concealed their
 “ names, and who, WHILE THEY VIOLATED ALL
 “ LAWS, yet observed some of the forms of law ; de-
 “ manded all the prisoners to be brought before them.
 “ Two or THREE questions, and TWO or THREE re-
 “ plies, were, with them, a sort of trial, upon which
 “ they pronounced sentence of life or death. Beside
 “ the judges, stood the executioners : the sentence of
 “ the one, was scarcely suffered to precede the stroke
 “ of the other. The judge and the executioner, the
 “ court and the scaffold, life and death, were crowded
 “ and blended together, as if they had been but one.
 “ While one prisoner was tried, twenty others were
 “ executed. THE SHRIEKS AND GROANS OF THOSE
 “ WHO WERE MASSACRED, DROWNED THE VOICES OF
 “ ACQUITTAL. They who were spared, had to carry
 “ their fainting steps over the bodies of their fellow-
 “ prisoners, who had just been butchered before their
 “ eyes ”

Oh ! how would my enemies and calumniators ;
 those who have vowed my death, and those more ma-
 lignant still, who have vowed to blast my fame ; how
 would they rejoice ; if their power to ruin me, equalled
 their inclination ; and if they could at once destroy all

the

the remaining copies of my speech, or could erase from those copies, every line in which my description of the events of the 2d and 3d days of September, has devoted those days of blood, to the eternal execration of every future generation of mankind! But, at the very time, at which it was delivered, that speech was, by order of the Legislators of France, printed at the national presses. It is deposited, most certainly, in the archives of the Republic; from which it cannot be surreptitiously withdrawn by my enemies, to be altered at their pleasure, to have things inserted in it, which I never said, and those things taken away, which I actually uttered. In that sacred repository, protected by all the *public force*, it must remain, as secure from violation, as the sentiments by which it was dictated, were void of selfishness or cruelty. There, it will ever have the force of a solemn protestation against the malice by which it has been disfigured and misrepresented. It will always tell, that the *Minister of Justice*, accused of having offered an apology for the massacres of the 2d and 3d of September, in the presence of the Legislators of the rising Republic; was, on the contrary, the *first person* who spoke of those massacres, with all the horror which they were naturally adapted to excite,—in the presence of France, and of all Europe,—in the presence perhaps of some of the men who were the secret authors of the massacres.

Of all the passions of the human heart, malice is the last to be calmed or extinguished, in the breast into which it has once entered in all its fury. Having its powers for the discernment of the truth, vitiated and

depraved ; it can never return to the exercise of equity toward those who have once become objects of its rage. It marches unchecked by conscience, and with arrogant audacity, along the dark and crooked paths of iniquity and bloodshed. Vain images of others' guilt, are continually conjured up before it, and drive it to madness. It no longer sees things in their real forms, nor men in their genuine colours : And the most illustrious innocence becomes the most offensive to its eyes. It suffers, itself, all those tortures which it would inflict upon others ; and its own embittered, agonising feelings serve to it, as proofs of the crimes which it fancies and imputes. Although at every impotent assault it may have made, it shall have been covered with confusion ; yet it will still renew its attacks, without seeing that these must again end in bringing redoubled confusion upon its own head.

Methinks, I hear it yet say to me ; *Why satisfy yourself with barely painting the deeds of those days in odious colours ? Your duty was, not to describe them, but to appreciate their demerits. Why did you not formally declare your opinion of them ?*

I might make this answer. The delineation of a crime, if drawn in strong enough colours to move the abhorrence of such as have not been accomplices in its guilt ; is the most tremendous judgment that can be pronounced against the crime and the criminals. A judgment enunciated in a proposition, may proceed from a mind which has beheld guilt, without indignation and without emotion. That judgment which is expressed in pictures, bringing before our eyes all
the

the circumstances of the crime, and all its atrocity, must be the effusion of a mind, still moved, agitated, afflicted by the painful remembrance of that which it stigmatizes and condemns.

I might answer: My speech contains in every part of it, precise estimates,—formal declarations, and these frequently repeated, of that judgment which you lament, that you did not hear from my lips, in a cold unimpassioned language. Whenever I was forced to touch upon those events, I could not help expressing, how exceedingly the contemplation of them shocked and pained my heart; how distressing it was to me, but to *relate* what those bad men had not hesitated to *execute*. I never mentioned them otherwise than as *horrible events, atrocious misdemeanours*.

But, I have a different answer to give.

In the words in which I mentioned those transactions of the 2d and 3d of September, I solemnly declared both my own private judgment concerning them, and that judgment which must be pronounced by the consenting voices of all nations, and of all ages. “The cry of WOUNDED INDIGNANT HUMANITY,” said I, “has no doubt already pronounced, upon the events of the 2d and 3d of September, a judgment which cannot fail to be repeated and confirmed by ALL NATIONS, and THROUGH ALL FUTURE TIMES!” Yes, in that very speech in which it is alledged, that I attempted an apology for the transactions of the 2d and 3d days of September, these words, here quoted, are the first which I uttered in regard to those days. Yes, I swear, that it is

so ; the speech now lies before me ; and I have faithfully copied the words which I cite.

Such are the surprising results of that painful and troublesome discussion, into which I have been reluctantly compelled to enter.

I wished to refer to the tumults of an insurrection, by which all order was, for a moment, overthrown,—those horrible events, which all the despots and oppressors of the earth, eagerly attributed to the influence of liberty, and to a magnanimous nation, which has been, for these last five years, eminently exposed to the observation and imitation of all the world. But, it has been alledged, that, when I traced the origin of those acts of turbulence and mad-dened riot, to the effect of an insurrection of too long continuance ; my design was, to procure them to be avowed by the nation, and counted among the glorious or necessary transactions of the revolution !

All was as yet precarious and alarming. The revolutionary commotions, instead of gently subsiding into a regulated and beneficial energy ; still gave birth to new commotions, more tumultuous and more destructive than the former. In these circumstances, I strove to warn the nation of the extreme danger of insurrections : I wished to tell them plainly, and without palliation, that the progress and incidents of an insurrection were far from being so faultless, as its end ; and that, in that temporary suspension of the ordinary laws, innumerable and hainous disorders must take place, on all hands. But it has been propagated, as a truth, that I laid it down as a revolutionary principle,

principle; that the CRIMES perpetrated in an insurrection, partake as much of the sanctity of exalted virtue, as the end which the insurrection proposes to itself!

In favour of men who were presumed to be guilty, but had been already severely punished by the horrors which they had witnessed, and the dangers which had environed them; I proposed a plan of *transportation*, the tendency of which was wholly to abrogate the punishment of *death*: and this, at a time when the parties springing up in the Republic, began to look towards the sword of the law, as the future instrument of their victories, and their vengeance. But, I have been treated as a man ready to abandon the cause of humanity, in order to devote himself to the intrigues of a party!

Known to love liberty and the means of its prosperity, with a rational and enlightened zeal; I portrayed the excesses of the 2d and 3d of September, in shockingly odious colours: Yet, it has been affirmed in print, that I represented those as days which ought ever to hold an honourable place among the *Fasts* of liberty! In my own name, in the name of all ages and all nations, in the name of *indignant, weeping* humanity, I represented them as days of horror! Yet has it been again and again asserted, that I attempted their apology and panegyric!

I implored the pity and mercy of the nation, in behalf of those *who had suffered by the excesses* of the 2d and 3d of September, for poor wretches who had narrowly escaped from the knife of the cut-throat.

But

But it has been supposed or pretended, that I spake in favour of *the authors of those excesses*, men who had feloniously butchered such multitudes of the innocent!

What an inconceivable collection this, of errors or malicious fictions; it may be of both malicious fictions and errors.

Have they gained credit? I have reason to believe, nay, I am certain, that they have not. But it is not their falsehood that has hindered them from making an impression upon public opinion. It is not a thorough knowledge of the substance of my speech: It is solely my known character that has made them fall harmless to the ground. The work has not justified its author; but the author has justified his work. And I must acknowledge, it is more grateful and soothing to me, that my personal character serves as a defence to my writings, than if my writings were necessary for the vindication of my character.

But, those falsehoods, although they have no where made any impression, have been every where propagated. And at this time, when the ferment of passion is greater than ever; when that bright day which had begun to break forth, has been suddenly eclipsed; when pitchy darkness has again settled itself over our political horizon;—even doubts the most unjust and absurd, deserve to be obviated and removed. When men are so much in one another's power, for either good or evil, it is of infinite importance, that they should know one another thoroughly. Involuntary suspicion in regard to me, remaining in the breast of any honest man, might, upon any of those great occasions

sions which, now, do not rarely recur, make him indifferent, either to do to me an act of justice, or to obtain justice from my hands. It is thus, the bonds of social union, are relaxed and dissolved. I protest that nothing but this consideration of public as well as of private interest could have induced me to engage in these long details towards a vindication of which I certainly cannot think, that I stand greatly in need.

For the same reason, I shall, in a few words, explain, by what singular coincidence of uncommon circumstances, that report which I have refuted, came to take its first rise, in respect to a speech, that every where expresses an abhorrence of bloodshed, love of humanity, respect for legal government, and a clear discrimination of the principles of social justice. It were better to dwell in savage solitude, than in society; if, unless in those rarely occurring instances, in which an assemblage of singular and unforeseen circumstances are accidentally combined; one could possibly be accused of blood-thirstiness and barbarity, precisely for having been humane, and for having endeavoured to exalt the humanity of a great nation. But explanations, such as this which I give, when they are not suppositions without proof, but facts accurately observed, clearly discriminated from those others among which they are naturally entangled, and diligently traced through all the links of their secret connections and dependencies; conduct us to those hidden springs, whose energy gives to opinions, their bias, and impels and guides the course of events. This species of knowledge, this application of logic, not to
ideas,

ideas, but to actions, is, beyond all others, rare : In a Republic, however, it is, beyond all others, necessary : And I repeat what I have before said, that, I should not have courage to continue my defence, were it not for the hope, that, in so doing, I shall perform a service to others, not less than to myself.

At that time, when I spoke in the presence of the National Convention, concerning the transactions of the 2d and 3d of September, there were in the bosom of the Convention itself, men, of whom some were suspected to have been the principal agents in exciting and conducting the massacres ; while others loudly applauded what those had done. On the other hand, there were likewise in the Convention, men, who utterly abhorred both the massacres, and those who had encouraged and justified them ; but refrained, for the present, from accusation ; awaiting the time when they might launch it with the tremendous efficacy of lightning and thunder, upon the heads of their rivals in influence and power. When my first words concerning the massacres, which invoked upon them the imprecations of humanity, were heard by their advocates and apologists : these men instantly imagined, that I was about to propose the immediate institution of a criminal *prosecution* against those by whom the massacres had been perpetrated. Murmurs arose : And, while I put my questions, and stated my principles ; a confused noise prevailed through the hall of the Convention. When, at last, amid that noise, the words, *pity, mercy, civil jubilee*, without the sentences, and the train of discourse, with which they were connected,

connected, were heard in my speech; it was imagined by those who entertained latent purposes of prosecution against the authors of the massacres; that I sought their approbation of those nefarious deeds, or at least an amnesty for them; and the hissing murmurs then passed from the left to the right side of the Convention, or rather continued upon the one side, and were at the same time extended to the other. The exordium of my speech was but too well heard by the one party; its progress was too imperfectly heard by the other. But, for that for which some of the members on the right side were disposed to blame me, some members on the left side, affected to give me the highest praises. They eagerly embraced a mistake which seemed to give to their sanguinary principles, the sanction of the *Minister of Justice*; who was not understood to be a man of a barbarous heart; and who, in several of his writings, while he consigned to ignominy and abhorrence, the vain sophisms of aristocracy, had more than once pleaded the imprescriptible rights of humanity, in favour of *aristocrats* themselves.

Yet one mistake more was requisite, to prevent those which had been already made, from being readily recognised and renounced. That very mistake also took place.

On all hands, I have heard this phrase attributed to me. "The 2d and 3d of September are days, upon the events of which, we must perhaps cast a veil." These words were, in fact, uttered by a Minister, in the midst of the assembled Representatives of the Nation.

Had

Had these words been mine, I must unquestionably have had such very strong reasons for uttering, that I should not now disavow them. It is not on those things which have our approbation or praises, that we wish to throw a veil. Far from it. The Legislative Assembly cast the sacred veils of law over the well known transactions at Avignon ; But, it required all the phrenzy of aristocracy, to say that the Legislative Assembly had consecrated those transactions.

When we are not involved among the torrents and eddies of impetuous passions, and amid events, which, after engulfing and absorbing all on the one side, threaten equal ruin to the other : It is easy to propose questions of moral duty, as if we were still to chuse between bad and good, between good and better. But, amid the entanglements of affairs, amid the collisions of human interests and passions, amid the storms of civil revolution ; it too often happens, that we must of necessity make our choice between one evil of very great magnitude, and another evil, which although terrible, is however, less pernicious. And then, the truest wisdom, the most generous sacrifice of virtue, and that which costs the most, is, in some measure, to renounce the holy, unstained purity of virtue, and to put on, for a time, in the eyes of the world, the leopard-spots of vice, in order to accomplish a degree of good, which may be immense in its beneficence, yet unseen by every eye, as consisting altogether in the prevention of terrible, impending ills. Such was, I believe, the situation in which he found himself, when he uttered the expression which

was ascribed to me, but was not mine. It was Roland's. In the Legislative Assembly, on the 3d of September,, he thus spoke of the massacres: *Yesterday was a day, on the events of which, we must perhaps cast a veil.* Alas! I am far from envying, or wishing to withhold from—the memory of Roland, that love and esteem which those who witnessed his rigid probity, must still retain for him; those who were proscribed with him, by the same enemies. But, who shall hinder me from feeling, with grief and indignation, the injustice of that partiality which would attribute to me, as a crime, what belongs in truth to Roland, and was in him accounted virtue and wisdom?

How I have lengthened out explanations so clear, a defence so easy! I am sensible, that the obviousness of the truths which I have had to explain, and the extreme facility which I have found in vindicating my conduct, must have rendered this tedious detail, insipid and uninteresting. But, since I was obliged to enter at all upon it; I have endeavoured to leave no room to any person for again troubling either me or the public, upon any pretext whatever, with an imputation, shocking alike by its atrocious nature, by its absurdity, and by its injustice. I have endeavoured, that, if men whose heart and understanding are so framed, that they are never weary of the horrible and the ridiculous; should again resume it; I may then safely persist in my present firm purpose of making no second reply to whatever they may alledge; unless, from among my numerous enemies, of whom some hiss, while others speak, there shall arise some
one

one to offer himself, in evidence against me; whose name may not be such as to imply infamy, whose logic may be somewhat better than the ravings of a maniac, whose intentions may not be to give us a King!

I am ready to vindicate my conduct against the involuntary mistakes of my fellow-citizens, and of the judges of my country. But I cannot consent to defend the purity of my life against the infamous, or the honour due to my memory, when I shall be no more, against wretches, whose extreme wickedness even cannot exalt them into notoriety.

Under the tyrannical domination of Robespierre, and under Billaud; little doubtful of the fate that awaited me, I kept constantly about me means, by which I might at any time dispose of my own life, so as to baffle the murderous fury of the tyrants. It was a consolation to me, to reflect that I was in possession of such means, and that I had made a proper choice of them. Yet, after mature deliberation, I resolved to make no use of them. The principles of Socrates, upon the subject of the submission due to the laws and to social order, even when these are represented by judges the most unjust, had always appeared to me to be the extravagance of magnanimity and virtue. But when I now again examined them, with an immediate view to my own situation and conduct, they appeared to me inviolably sacred and sublime. Amidst those many horrors, which, for a course of eight months, were hidden in the shades of each re-

turning night, only to be again displayed by the blaze of the rising day ; I did not find that the natural pains and anxieties of death, could be, in any considerable degree, enhanced to my imagination by the prospect of that passage to the *scaffold*, in which the sufferer might shew to the surrounding people, *with what tranquil fortitude the innocent can die !* O thou who, from delineating a SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN MIND, didst withdraw thy hand, but to present the deadly beverage to thy lips ; thy final determination to die, was founded upon different sentiments, and different reasons : Thou didst set thy republican soul at everlasting liberty, by the use of that poison which we had shared between us, as two brothers would share their last morsel of bread ! Thou art no more ! but I still live, to meet the accusations of men, who, as well as I, invoke thy name with passionate veneration ; but who would not, like me, expose themselves to dangers infinitely greater than those which actually environed them, in order to save from the grasp of the executioner, a life of which the loss must long be felt as a misfortune by France and by Europe.

Now, when the same persons are no longer both our accusers, and our judges ; now, when they, who enjoy the august name of *Representatives of a great people*, are all well aware, that a free people cannot be really represented, unless their nominal representatives be superior to all private interests and passions, and be capable of acting as the incorruptible organs of the universal and immutable principles of reason

D

and

and justice : Now, when judges, although named by our representatives, have regard to the public, and the nation alone, in their official conduct ; receiving from our legislators, the laws by which they are to judge, but not their conscience, conviction, or final determination : Now, when the whole power of the Republic threatens punishment upon those who would misemploy the sword of national justice : *At this time* innocence, even although not absolutely void of all fear, and not entirely unassailed by the noise of clanking fetters, and decapitating hatchets, can, however, be under no serious alarm for her safety. Obligated to give this public account of my conduct, I have thus found a fair occasion for producing some claims upon the national esteem, and for fully unfolding all the sentiments and affections of a soul, in which there were perhaps some worth, and some virtues concealed by silence. Again : It is to the Republic, to its legislators, to its judges, I address myself : No law of society, no principle of morality, can force an honest man to make answer to despicable calumniators, fools and hypocrites, combined in one miserable knot of conspirators, and labouring, with all the power of wretched pamphlets, hand-bills, and whatever else there is more deplorably vile ; all to subvert the very moderate success of the inconsiderable abilities of a man, who never sold himself to aristocracy or royalty, to *Feuillants* or to *Jacobins*, to the right side, or to the left side of the Convention, to his friends, nor to his enemies. If my whole life have been employed in combating errors fatal to mankind ; then surely
ought

ought men, from whom I ask nothing more, to spare me the trouble of refuting gross falsehoods, and base liars. Ah! had I been capable of listening to any voice but that of reason, or of consulting any interest, save those of truth, and of the Commonwealth; I had not then been for ever beset by so many dangers, in the solitary course of my life! I might have been threatened from one, but not from every quarter. Although I might have offended the prejudices and passions of some men, I should have gratified those of others. The combination of those with whom I had associated myself, would have been my protection against the cabal of those with whom I had refused to associate. I was no stranger to the advice offered by Machiavel to politicians, whom he would have to disregard altogether the voice of conscience. BE, says he, A MORTAL FOE; and THE MOST FAITHFUL OF FRIENDS: But I, for my part, strove only to be inflexibly JUST. How happily has that conduct turned out for both myself and others! But, I am speaking of my thoughts, of my recollections, I forget, that I have not yet explained the important transactions of my administration, or exhibited a full view of the progress of my conduct, while in office. Let me return to this deduction; and make no farther digression from it.

In the newspapers, the heads of accusation, *denounced* against me by Philip Dumont, have been stated in several different ways, varying considerably from one another. I shall copy the report from those newspapers, in which these heads of accusation, have been exhibited

exhibited as the most serious, and the most numerous. To the *first* I have made my reply : It relates solely to the 2d and 3d days of September. The rest are : 1st, That I made an apology for the acts of pillage committed in the month of February, 1793. 2^{dly}, That I deceived the National Convention by my reports upon the popular commotions which took place on the 10th of March, and the days immediately subsequent. 3^{dly}, That I, in conjunction with Pache and Bouchotte, promoted the events of the 31st of May, and the 2d of June.

Philip Dumont, although not my only enemy, has, however, been my only accuser. And, at the very instant when he accused me, several other deputies stood forward to defend me.

The act does them honour : for they spoke without having any personal connection with me, and solely out of a regard for truth.

In his accusation, Philip Dumont has cited none of my words, has referred to none of my actions ; his charges are founded rather on dates, than upon facts. He does not seem to know me to be guilty ; but to wish to believe me so. And at the very instant of his displaying this disposition, two of his colleagues, both of them members of the Committee of Public Safety, on the 31st of May, asserted, upon their own personal, ocular, knowledge, what entirely justifies me. Contrary to the usual fate of *denunciations*, which, when first produced, have commonly a degree of triumphant celebrity, Philip Dumont's accusation against me, was, even from the
very

very first, heard with cold indifference. Before it reached my ears, every article of it had been already contested : and its most important point, relative to the 31st of May, completely refuted. In this course of life, which is way-laid by so many difficulties, which is beset by so many dangers, there are still fellow-travellers to be found, who, even from a distance, and before you invoke their aid, stretch out a friendly hand, to support, and to relieve. The experience of such kindness, is sufficient to soothe the anguish of the mind that is wounded by the far different, and more frequent experience of the desertion of false friends, and the bitter malignity of unprovoked enemies.

It is difficult for me to make answer to what Philip Dumont has said of my apology for the pillages committed in the month of February : for I can scarcely understand what he means. It would be strange, indeed, if a *Minister of Justice*, still entrenching himself within the sanctuary of the laws, should have made himself the apologist for massacres and for pillage, alternately. I have, in the course of my life, read a good deal of history, and have found in it, many things by which I have been greatly edified.

But if I could believe what Philip Dumont tells of me, beyond that which I am myself actually conscious of ; the most extraordinary transactions commemorated in history, would be but familiar and trivial, in comparison with what I myself should have done.

Many people are guilty of *acts of pillage*. Some meanly pick pockets of small sums : others, with an

apparent grandeur and magnanimity of proceeding, feloniously abstract large sums from the treasures, and from the blood of nations. But, in general, if it be possible to find good reasons for acts of pillage perpetrated by one's self; it is difficult to approve or vindicate those which are committed by others.

Even the moral sentiments of robbers, are upon this head, not less pure and strict than those of honest men.

Machiavel says; *It is not necessary that a ruler should be an honest man*; but, he ought to take great care to appear such. This care is rarely neglected; and both parts of Machiavel's precept seldom fail to be punctiliously obeyed. By Philip Dumont's account, however, one of them must have been by me egregiously violated: and I must have taken very little care to appear an honest man. Is it possible, that I should have, by accident, followed the converse of Machiavel's precept? and instead of appearing an honest man, without being such, should have approved myself an honest man indeed, without being concerned to appear honest? It is not probable. For although a rogue may have good reasons for wishing to be thought an honest man, an honest man can have no reasons for desiring to seem a rogue.

It is likely that I should forget, that, we are amidst the æra of a revolution; that, in the course of this revolution, that grand principle of *the equal division of property*, had been suggested by men of the most liberal and exalted genius; and that, in order to try how this principle would answer in practice, men who

who had nothing, took their all from those who had something; and leaving them nothing, called this a very equal and fraternal partition of wealth! Might it not then be possible for me to associate my own notions of the principles of legislation, with those wonderful ideas of this matter, which were so familiar to *the Friends of the People*, and to which St Just was daily advancing with all that rapidity of progress which befitted the energy of his genius? No; it has not been so; I must have always had some scruples and weaknesses in respect to those splendid ideas: I was never quite up to them; but always somewhat behind. It is therefore sufficiently evident, that I could not merit either such exalted honours, or such shameful abasement,

For all these reasons, I think myself exempted from the necessity of proving, that I have not made an apology for the acts of pillage which were committed.

But, although I think myself thus easily absolved from the necessity of producing proof, to exculpate me from the charge of apologizing for those pillaging riots, which were committed in the month of February; there is, however, another explanation in respect to those riots, which Philip Dutton perhaps desires to hear from me, and which I am certainly not averse to give him. I was enjoined by a decree of the Convention, to inquire after the authors of those riots, and to prosecute them, according to law. At that period, when events crowded upon one another with a rapidity of succession, and a menacing aspect, which rendered them, every day, more alarming than be-

fore, I was hindered by a variety of circumstances from giving the Convention an account of the measures which I had taken for the execution of its decree. But, never was there any decree more scrupulously, more strictly, more expeditiously obeyed by me. Of this the particulars contained in the *note* to which I refer the reader, will afford satisfactory documents.

Philip Dumont has expressed in very vague language, his charges against me, in respect to the accounts I gave the Convention, of those commotions which agitated all Paris, and threatened the safety of the Convention itself. He has exhibited those facts upon which he here accuses me, with no degree of precision. I shall lend him my assistance to perfect my own indictment. The criminal, whether the accuser, or the person accused, be he, has need of that obscurity which is necessarily afforded by uncertainty of facts, and vague confusion of ideas. Innocence, on the contrary, asks for its defence, only that it be fairly exposed to light; and it is precision alone, that, in such cases, dispelling the chaos of facts and ideas, seems to say, with a voice of sovereign command; *Let there be light!* Innocence, when accused, displays that heroism which is peculiar to itself; and when persecuted by the great ones of the earth, cries aloud;

Dispel this cloud, the light of Heaven restore;

Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more;

If Greece must perish, we thy will obey:

But let us perish in the face of day!

There are four different periods, concerning which I may be accused of not having stated to the Convention,

tion, all that I knew of them, or of not having known all the truth, when I addressed the Convention respecting them. 1st, The 10th of March: 2d, The period almost immediately subsequent, which is virtually the very same, and which comprehends my inquiries and communications concerning a committee, that took the name of a *Committee of insurrection*: 3d. The period of the 27th of May, when I spoke in the Convention, which was then said to be *besieged*: 4th, The period of the 31st day of May, and the 2d of June, the transactions of which I am said to have promoted in concert with Pache and Bouchotte; in short, to have been one of their prime authors.

Before entering into any discussion concerning the part which I may have taken in the different transactions of these four periods; it is necessary that I first review these general circumstances which are common to all the four, and which have been the causes of all the events by which they are distinguished.

Almost all nations of the earth, have fancied or fabricated a temple for the Destinies, and in that temple have represented Deities good or evil, contending among themselves for the right of emitting those decrees which are to regulate the fortunes of mankind. The allegory is striking, and is susceptible of application to a thousand instances in the transactions and events of civil life. The Convention, from the time of its very first meetings, was divided into two parties, or two *sides*.

A view of the causes of those divisions, of their progress,

of

of their collisions and explosions, might not only afford sufficient light to clear up and justify my conduct; but might even carry its irradiation farther. Such a view I had here traced; but, upon second thoughts, I blotted out what I had written. I reserve it for the time when I shall appear before the tribunal of posterity, perhaps rather with the authority of a judge, than the confusion of a person under accusation.

Here I am obliged to confine myself to the mere results.

At the end of two or three months after its first meeting, and particularly from the time of the condemnation and punishment of the late King; the debates in the Convention ceased to be discussions of principles, and degenerated into mere personal quarrels. Mutual suspicions and hatreds pervaded every mind, and rankled in every heart; so that there remained no one sufficiently impartial to act as a mediator among the rest. There was none possessed of that energy of neutrality and moderation, which is peculiarly rare, because the passions explode and cry it down, under the contemptuous appellation of *imbecillity*. The contest was between all those who sat on one side, and all those on the other. It might have been said, that they were two distinct assemblies, preparing, each, daily acts of accusation against the other, in the presence of the whole Republic. And in those mutual acts of accusation, what were the facts reciprocally alledged?

The right side said to the left side: "The Legislators of a great republic ought to be animated with
" the

“ the most sincere respect and love for humanity ;
 “ and you, all polluted as you are with the blood shed
 “ upon the 2d and 3d days of September, cannot be
 “ fit persons to give laws to France. The legislators
 “ of an empire, destined by the fertility of its territo-
 “ rial soil, the genius of its inhabitants, and the
 “ great share which it engrosses of the commerce of
 “ the universe, destined by these advantages, to at-
 “ tain to the most fortunate pitch of general prosperity,
 “ ought to regard property as one of the most sacred
 “ fundamental principles of social order. Surely, then,
 “ the functions of legislators of France cannot be ful-
 “ filled by you, who preach anarchy, who protect
 “ pillage, who promulgate principles by which pro-
 “ prietors are brought into terror, who excite those
 “ who have no possessions but vice and misery, a-
 “ gainst those who are easy in the circumstances of
 “ their fortune, and not destitute of virtues. The
 “ abuse of liberty has ever proved its ruin ; and you
 “ push the revolution to every disorderly excess to which
 “ it can be perverted. After long anarchy, tyranny
 “ always starts up ; and you are the men by whom
 “ anarchy is, in all quarters, fomented and maintained.
 “ Who is there so blind as not to see, that your fu-
 “ ries of patriotism are merely the disguise and the en-
 “ gines of evil purposes by which you are violently
 “ driving, to reduce the rising Republic into the most
 “ abject servitude ? Is the furious extravagance of
 “ your apparent patriotism any pledge that you are
 “ incapable of perfidy ? No man was ever more
 “ perfidious than Cromwell ; yet no man ever
 “ displayed

“ displayed more of the furious extravagance of zeal:
 “ Of all animals, a tyger is, at once, the most blood-
 “ thirsty and the most cunning. You have put to
 “ death a King who was not of your own creation ;
 “ but, you have among you one of the Bourbons,
 “ who hopes, that you will exalt him upon the va-
 “ cant throne ; it was in a dependence upon the mu-
 “ tual faith of robbers to one another, that he gave
 “ his vote for the death of him whom he regards as
 “ his own predecessor. True republicans have no
 “ wealth, but you scatter gold and silver with bound-
 “ less profusion, wherever there are corrupt minds
 “ to be bought, and venal hands to be armed. You
 “ are for ever whetting the assassin’s daggers for
 “ slaughter ; and to massacre the citizens of the Re-
 “ public, is to murder the Republic itself. You in-
 “ stigate against us all the ruffian cut-throats in Pa-
 “ ris. We invoke to our aid against you, all the
 “ honest men in France.”

The left side again said to the right : “ So much often-
 “ tious talk of your virtues, unavoidably excites us
 “ to suspect, that you have vices and guilty projects
 “ to hide under this assumed disguise. Such pride
 “ of talents and illumination of mind, convinces us
 “ that you purpose to employ your talents for your
 “ own aggrandisement, not to promote the interests
 “ of general EQUALITY. In your hands liberty would
 “ soon be strangled. When the thunders of national
 “ vengeance struck a guilty Monarch, you had not
 “ yet ceased to pay your court, and to offer your
 “ vows of allegiance, to the criminal. While he al-
 “ lowed

"lowed you to rule in his name, by the ministration
 "of servants whom you had recommended to him ;
 "you then thought him sufficiently faithful to the
 "nation. You did not begin to look upon him as
 "a traitor, till he frustrated the views of your ambi-
 "tion, as well as betrayed the nation. Your secret
 "wishes never were to exalt France to the glorious de-
 "stiny of a great republic, but to preserve it under
 "the mock government of a King, whom you might
 "accuse and protect, by turns ; who should be *your*
 "prisoner, and you the mayors of *his* palace. Upon
 "your plan the King would have enjoyed a shadowy
 "royalty ; the nation would have had but a shadow
 "of liberty ; the only realities left, would have been
 "your tyranny, and usurped power. You base men,
 "who think tricks and low artifices to be all the science
 "of a *statesman* ; know that true republicans ad-
 "vance with intrepid rapidity along those broad
 "paths which they have opened up for themselves ;
 "and that the crafty politicians are men who, like
 "you, slowly insinuate themselves through those
 "obliquities which they have marked out and wa-
 "ved for themselves. When the tyrant appeared be-
 "fore that national justice, of which you and we were
 "the organs, *we* pronounced sentence of death upon
 "him ; but, *you*, who wished to save his life which
 "you wanted for the purposes of your cabals, when,
 "to share our glory, you voted, with us, *for his*
 "DEATH, proposed, in addition, an APPEAL TO
 "THE PEOPLE, in order to save the tyrant whom
 "you pretended to condemn. By this act alone,
 "statesmen

" statesmen worthy of Borgia and his preceptor ! you
 " procured us to be abhorred as men of savage cruel-
 " ty ; you procured yourselves to be adored, as emi-
 " nently just ; and you have conjured up a civil war, to
 " to rend France in pieces, to divide it into fœderal
 " states, of which you hoped to be the sole legi-
 " slators, consuls, ephori, archontes. You have scarce-
 " ly at all deplored the effusion of republican blood
 " shed in this war against Europe, which the eager
 " wishes of the people indeed contributed to kindle,
 " but which your motions ultimately served to excite.
 " But, the effusion of the blood shed in the prisons
 " for the safety, and by the vengeance of the peo-
 " ple, you would at all rates avenge. It was the
 " blood of *aristocrates*. What mean your continual
 " cries against us, as endeavouring to abolish all
 " property ? What mean they,—but that you
 " wish to have at your command an army of pro-
 " prietors, whom you may employ against us ? an
 " army which you would not pay, but receive pay
 " from them ! What mean those eternal clamours
 " that you deliberate with the daggers of assassins
 " at your breasts ; that three hundred legislators are
 " three hundred murderers, ever watching for op-
 " portunities to butcher the other three hundred
 " members of the Legislative Body ? Pisistratus did
 " more than raise a cry about assassins ; he wounded
 " himself and his mules ; and on the morrow, Pisi-
 " tratus, encompassed with his guards, was the tyrant
 " of his country. Statesmen, your wishes are, at the
 " best, but for liberty without equality : but, we,
 " whom

“ whom you call savages, because we are as inflexible
 “ as the eternal principles of the rights of man,—we
 “ desire equality, for no other reason, but because, in
 “ our judgment, liberty can have no existence without
 “ it. Statesmen, you seek to establish a republic for
 “ the peculiar benefit of the rich, amidst whose
 “ riches, a republican constitution would quickly pe-
 “ rish: We, however, who are not statesmen, but
 “ plain men of nature, destitute of art or science,
 “ but instinctively inspired with the sentiments and
 “ the energies of virtue,—we seek laws which may re-
 “ lieve the poor man from his misery, and disencum-
 “ ber the rich of their opulence; which, diffusing ge-
 “ neral and equal plenty and comfort, may make us
 “ all, the happy citizens, and the zealous defenders of
 “ a republic which shall remain while the world en-
 “ dures, and shall ever command the wondering ap-
 “ probation of all mankind. Statesmen, it is by and
 “ for that multitude by you dreaded or despised; it
 “ is by and for the people who commenced and have
 “ carried on the Revolution: yes, it is by and for
 “ them alone, that we desire to perfect it. Beware;
 “ the people may be, for a while, deceived by their
 “ oppressors; but, their passions take arms with in-
 “ conceivable quickness and impetuosity in behalf
 “ of their most passionate friends. Beware of forcing
 “ us to call the furious passions of the people to the
 “ defence of their rights, and of our lives. You
 “ shall, in that event, perish; and the blood of pri-
 “ vate citizens of all parties, must profusely flow,
 “ and

“ and mingle with the streaming blood of legislators
 “ of both sides in the Convention. If you be not
 “ traitors and conspirators, relinquish your pride,
 “ at the prospect of those ills with which your coun-
 “ try is threatened.”

Whoever shall please to read the printed speeches, the newspapers, and the pamphlets of the time, will perceive, that the above is a faithful, but rather a mitigated abstract of the accusations which were then urged by the right side of the Convention against the left; and by the left side of the Convention against the right. What was printed, was equally uttered in conversation; and has been an hundred times uttered from both sides, in my hearing.

Particularly, I often recollected, and always with horror, two conversations which I had held within the space of five or six days, the one with Robespierre, the other with Salles.

Both are well known to have been, with me, members of the Constituent Assembly. For three years, we had voted almost daily on the same side in every question. But I never had any particular connection with either the one or the other.

I shall however declare the opinion which I entertained of both, in consequence of the observations I had made on their abilities and dispositions, in the Constituent Assembly.

I believe them both to be sincerely and ardently attached to the Revolution. I gave both full credit for *probity*; affixing to this word, not the idea of a man
 always

always doing that alone which is good ; but the idea of a man, ever wishing to do what is best, and believing that he does it. If I could have doubted of the probity and patriotism of either the one or the other, after two or three public transactions ; my doubts would have fallen on Salles, rather than on Robespierre. But I had no doubt of either the one or the other.

With a very bustling turn of mind, and an imagination exceedingly heated by the business in which he was engaged, and by the principles of the Revolution ; SALLES appeared to me, to possess, however, no real abilities.

In ROBESPIERRE,—notwithstanding the nonsense and absurdity of those extemporaneous harangues which he daily uttered in the Convention ; notwithstanding his endless tattle about the rights of man, the sovereignty of the people,—principles of which he was continually talking, without ever communicating a single idea about them, that was, in any degree, new or exact ;—in him, I fancied that I could discern, especially when he printed his compositions, the first efforts of rising genius, which was susceptible of improvement ; which did actually improve, and of which the energies might, one day, fully expand, so as to do much good, or much mischief. In his style, I saw a care to study and to imitate those forms of expression, which possess elegance, dignity, and splendour. By those which he imitated and produced the oftenest, I could perceive that the writings of Rousseau were his great school and model. I had hopes, that, since

F.

he

he took Rousseau for his model in style, the frequent reading of that author's writings, might have something of an happy effect upon his character.

But, in both Salles and Robespierre, what I the most clearly saw, was that erroneous cast of judgment which is exceedingly common among men who are called to discuss questions of great magnitude; and which may prove extremely fatal to those who are interested in the discussion of great political questions.

The master-sentiment in the heart of Robespierre; of which he made no secret; and which, in addition to some bold attacks against men of intrigue, had procured to him, among the clubs and circles of Paris, the title of *incorruptible*,—This master-sentiment was, that the defender of the people can never be in the wrong; that to discover any moderation, or to set any bounds to his principles, would be treason against the people; that in all the people do, and in all that is said for them, there can be nothing but virtue and truth, neither extravagance, error, nor criminality. Intolerance, natural as it is to the human mind, is ever ready to take up such sentiments, amid all the various wars of opinion. But, these sentiments are, in a particular manner, inseparable from the jarrings of sects in religion, and from the contests of *popular politics*.

Acting in the cause of God, or of the people, we are not apt to fancy, that we can either do too much, or do amiss. And this it is, which has so often bound the

the martyr of religion to the stake, and brought the head of the unfortunate politician to the block.

Both Robespierre and Salles were subject to the ascendancy of that atrabilarious temperament, which proves the torment of those in whom it prevails, and from which have, in all ages, arisen those storms which have tempested the moral world. Minds of this cast can never leave mankind at peace, till they have fettered them in the chains of some gloomy superstition, or under the restraints of a logic rigorously accurate and severe. They always are either fools or scoundrels, saints or eminent philosophers.

In ages which derive their predominant character from the prevalence of religion, it often happens to such men, that after committing some crime, which they cannot recollect without horror, they hide themselves, for the rest of life, in deserts, and in caverns, while shrinking imagination continually pictures before them, the fathomless abyss, and the lurid fires of hell. The cloisters, which have received many men of this character have been highly beneficial to the world.

In ages of philosophy, they devote themselves to philosophy with a superstitious zeal: they carry their abstraction and reasonings to an extraordinary pitch. But, their reasonings are often sophisticated in their sensations; the very sources of reason. When the bent of their minds is directed towards objects in regard to which their sensations cannot be depraved; then they discover all the energy and perspicacity of genius. As to other matters, they rave by rule, and

without affording any prospect of their ever coming to think soberly about them.

I should not be surprised to learn, that Robespierre was not without some religion. But, never man, who knew to write with such propriety and elegance, was so utterly a stranger to sound logic. His best reasons at all times, were his suspicions.

When I, one day, begged to reflect upon some things which I had stated to him, and which might have saved him from all those crimes, which brought so many others, and himself at last, to the block; he answered me in these very words; *I have no need for reflection; I trust always to my first impressions.* With such a complexion of mind, and amid that current of events in which he was involved, his first impressions were always impressions of hatred, suspicion, terror, pride, and revenge. Hence the origin of those crimes which deluged the republic with the blood of its citizens; for those crimes were not the results of any settled plan of tyranny, which a man, who descended, step by step, into the most execrable depth of wickedness, could never have had sufficient greatness of mind, even to conceive. This character of his, and the fate to which it conducted him, present that very example, and that very lesson, of which we stand the most in need. No, Robespierre never had a wish to abolish the Republic; but he deformed it with crimes, and deluged it with blood, and fancied that, in so doing, he was calling forth and invigorating its strength, and advancing its prosperity. He was not an ambitious tyrant, but a ferocious

cious monster. Athens, till it received the yoke of Philip, escaped the domination of tyrants, yet suffered almost without intermission, all the worst evils of tyranny, from the savage or giddy passions of its citizens. I repeat, that this is the lesson of which, above all others, democracy stands peculiarly in need. By converting, in imagination, those instances of extravagant folly and guilt, which our fellow-republicans have exhibited, into projects and systems of usurpation and tyranny ; we should deprive ourselves of the only advantage that can be drawn from the disasters we have suffered.

I have given some account of those two men : I shall next speak of the conversations I held with them.

My interview with Robespierre, was in consequence of my own particular request. In consenting to it, he shewed a degree of insolence, which I am far from being naturally disposed to bear with humility and submission. Yet, I was grateful for his compliance. My mind was so wholly engrossed by the important interest with a view to which I had solicited this interview, as to be scarcely at all sensible of what, in any other case, I could not have endured.

It was before the 10th of March.

Robespierre scarcely gave me time to say, that I wished to speak to him concerning the quarrels in the Convention. " All those deputies of the Gironde," said he, impatiently, " Brissot, Louvet, Barbaroux, are, without exception, counter-revolutionists, and conspirators."

spirators." I could not help smiling; at which he was exceedingly exasperated.—“ This has always been your way,” said he. “ In the Constituent Assembly you were inclined to think the *aristocrates* friendly to the Revolution.”—I never went quite so far. At the utmost, I thought only, that some of the nobles might not be *aristocrates*. I thought so of several among them; and you yourself are still of the same mind, in respect to some of them. I cannot help thinking still, that we might have gained even some of the *aristocrates*, if, of two different means which were in our power, *force* and *reason*, we had chosen oftener to employ reason, which was solely upon our side, and force more rarely, which was capable of being, likewise, sooner or later, on the side of the tyrants. Let me persuade you to forget those dangers which we have now surmounted, and which had nothing in common with these which now threaten us. The war was then between the friends and the enemies of liberty! It is now between the divided friends of the Republic.—Had I an opportunity, I should tell Louvet, that he is absurd in supposing you a royalist; but, I must say to you, that Louvet is no more a royalist than yourself. In your quarrels, you resemble the Molinists and the Jansenists; whose whole dispute turned upon the manner in which divine grace acts upon the soul of man; and who yet accused one another of not believing in the existence of God. “ If they be not royalists, why, then, were they so anxious to save the life of a King? I could wager, that you likewise were inclined to the side of mercy, of clemency, as you call it.”—I should

not

not be afraid to declare my opinion ; but it is not the matter now in question. It probably would not have refused to *inflict* the punishment of death upon a man charged with such enormous crimes. But, my opinion did not accord precisely with any opinion that had been publicly proposed in the Convention. As to clemency ; it is the disposition of mind most natural to republicans and conquerors : and a dead enemy may often do more harm than if he had been living.—“ That is a very refined notion.” That, to me, appears nothing but plain truth. “ You, then, disapprove the sentence of condemnation to death, which you notified at the Temple : and did my speech then seem horrible to you ? ” I might disapprove that sentence, although I officially notified it : but, if I had thought it absolutely unjust, I would then have given in my resignation, and would not have gone to the Temple. It was your speech that rapidly brought the scale of condemnation to preponderate in the balance of national justice. Barrere’s speech finally fixed the preponderancy, upon the same side. Would you have me freely declare what I think of your speech ?—“ Yes.”—Of all the speeches delivered upon that occasion, yours made incomparably the most powerful impression upon my mind. Your fundamental idea is new, and unexpected, and absolutely confounds with astonishment the judgment of the nearer or reader : The style is bold and elegant : it abounds in passages glowing with passion, and in skilful transitions : it is an effort of genius ; but, I confess, the logic of it appears to me very extraordinary, and entirely false. You prove successfully enough, that it would

have been lawful to put Capet to death on the 10th of August, either at the *Castle*, or in the box of the *Logographe*, in the National Convention, in which he took refuge. It would have been but the exercise of the right of war. But, the right which war gives, of putting an enemy to death, is confined in its operation, to the time of battle. When the battle is over, the right of slaughter ceases. None but Tartars think themselves at liberty to butcher their prisoners in cold blood: none but the savages of the American forests, think they have a right to devour their captives taken in war. Your speech may be a model of eloquence; but it is nevertheless a specimen of inconclusive logic: to your leading principles, there must be other principles added, in order to prove, that the law, condemning Capet to the block, was a grand act of national justice, on the part of France; and to the whole world, a great and conspicuous example, more lawful, more necessary, more useful, than the example of the trial and execution of Charles the First of England.—“ And what matters it, upon what principle, the death of the tyrant, was found to be just and necessary? Your Girondines, your Brissot, your appellants to the people, strove to save him. They were willing to leave to tyranny all the means necessary to enable it once more to exalt itself upon our necks.”

I know not, whether it were the intention of the appellants to the people, to save Louis from suffering death. The *appeal to the people* always appeared to me a measure rash and dangerous. But,

I can conceive, how who those voted for it might be led to think, that Capet, alive and a prisoner, might, amid the shocks and fluctuations of events, become more useful to the people, than if put to death. I can conceive, how they might be led to regard the appeal to the people, as a means for doing honour to a republican nation in the eyes of the whole world, by affording them occasion to exercise, in their own names, a great act of generosity, in an act of sovereignty."—This is, certainly, to ascribe excellent intentions, to measures of which you could not approve, and to men who form conspiracies in every quarter."—

And where do they form conspiracies?—"Every where. In Paris, in all France, in all Europe. Genfonnè conspires in the suburb of St Antoine; going that about from shop to shop, to persuade the merchants, we patriots are preparing to pillage their shops and warehouses. The Gironde has long since formed the design of detaching itself from France, and joining England; its leading deputies are the authors of the plan, and have determined to carry it into execution, at all rates. Genfonnè makes no secret of this; but tells any one who is willing to listen to him, that here they are not representatives of the nation, but plenipotentiaries of the Gironde. Brissot conspires in his journal, which is the alarm-bell to a civil war. We know that he is gone to England, and know his reasons for going thither. We are not strangers to his intimate connection with that minister for foreign affairs, that Le Brun, who is a native of Liege, and a creature of the House of Austria. The
best

best friend Brissot has is Claviere ; and Claviere has carried conspiracy wherever he has himself turned his footsteps. Rabaut, a Protestant, a philosopher, and therefore a traitor, has not had art enough to hide from us his correspondence with that courtier and traitor, Montesquiou. For these six months, they have been concerting together, how to open Savoy and France to the invasion of the Piedmontese. Servan has been named general, for no other end, but to deliver up the keys of France to the Spaniards. Dumourier's threats are directed more against Paris than Holland. And when that quack-hero came hither, WHERE IT WAS MY WISH TO ARREST HIM, it was not with the Mountain he daily dined, but with the Ministers and the Girondines." Three or four times with me, for instance.—"I am WEARY OF THE REVOLUTION ; I am sick of it : never was country in greater danger than ours now is ; and I doubt whether we shall be able to extricate it. Well then ! are you now disposed to laugh and regard those people as honest men, and good republicans ?"—No ; I am no longer disposed to laugh ; but I hardly refrain from shedding those tears which are due to the misfortunes of our country, when I see her legislators preyed upon by suspicions so atrocious, and so slenderly supported by probability. I am sure, that there is no truth in these suspicions of yours ; but still surer, that these very suspicions are themselves a very real, and a very great danger. Almost all these men are at present your enemies ; but none of them, save Dumourier, is the enemy of the Republic. And if all parties

parties could lay aside their reciprocal grudges, the Republic would no more be in danger.—“Do not you propose to me to repeat the motion of Bishop Lamouret?”—No; I have at least sufficiently profited by the lessons you have given me: And three National Assemblies have taken pains to instruct me, that the best patriots hate their enemies still more than they love their country. But, I have a question to put to you; and I entreat you to recollect yourself before you make me an answer. Have you any doubts about any part of what you have said to me? None at all. I left him, upon this, and retired in great astonishment, and even horror, at what I had heard.

Some days after this, going out from the Executive Council, I met Salles coming out from the National Convention. The circumstances of the time had continued to become more and more alarming. None who had any esteem for one another, could meet, without being moved to enter into conversation concerning the critical situation of the commonwealth.

What is this! said I to Salles, accosting him. Are there no means by which we may contrive to pacify these angry contentions?—“O, yes, I hope thereare. I hope shortly to withdraw the veils which hide the villanies of those men, and of their conspiracies, from public view. But, as for you, I know that you have always a blind confidence, and a foolish resolution to believe nothing. You do me wrong. I reason like others; but, I must have presumptions, not barely suspicions; attested facts, not imaginary ones.

ones. Why should you suppose me so incredulous? Is it because I would not believe you in the year 1789, when you assured me, that Necker robbed the treasury; and that the mules had been seen loaded with gold and silver, by which he sent millions to Geneva? My incredulity on that score, I confess, proved incorrigible; for I am even now convinced, that Necker has left here more millions of his own, than he has carried of ours to Geneva.—“Necker was a poultry rascal.”—But, that was nothing to the scoundrels who now swarm about us; and it is of them, I would speak to you, were you willing to hear me. Most willingly shall I hear you: and, to be more secure from interruption, we went into the hall of the Executive Council, in which there was then no person.—“I shall tell you all; for I know it all. I have detected all their dark intrigues. All the plots, all the crimes of the Mountain, began with the Revolution. Orleans is the head of that knot of villains. He is the author of the infernal romance of the *dangerous connections*, which has planned all the crimes committed by them, during these last five years. The traitor, La Fayette, was their accomplice; and he it was, who, by pretending to disconcert the plot at its origin, sent D’Orleans into England, to arrange all with Pitt, the Prince of Wales, and the Court of St James’s. Mirabeau was also a party in this plot. He took money from the King to conceal his connections with D’Orleans; but he had still more money from D’Orleans, to bribe him to his interests. The grand affair for the party of D’Orleans,

leans, was, to bring the *Jacobins* to enter into their designs. This they durst not directly attempt : they first addressed themselves to the Cordeliers. Among the Cordelier society, all was at once fold and devoted to them. Observe, that the Cordeliers have been always less numerous, and have always made less noise, than the *Jacobins*. Their desire is to make all the world their tools ; but not to make all the world depositaries of their secrets. The Cordeliers have always been the centre of conspiracy : It is there that Danton, the most dangerous of all the conspirators, tutors and excites them to audacity and falsehood, while Marat spirits them up to assassination and massacre. It is there that they rehearse the parts they are to act among the Jacobins. The Jacobins, who seem as if they led all France, are themselves notoriously led by the Cordeliers. The Cordeliers, who seem to be hidden in a corner of Paris, negotiate with all Europe, and have envoys in all the Courts which have vowed the ruin of our liberty. The fact is certain. I am in possession of indubitable proofs of it. The Cordeliers, after overwhelming one throne in a deluge of blood, are preparing to shed new torrents of blood, in order to raise a new throne for the trophy of their slaughters. They know that the right side, on which is all the virtue of the Convention, is also the side on which are all the true Republicans. If they accuse us of royalism ; it is for no other reason, but because they want a pretext to let loose upon us the fury of the multitude ; but because they can easier find daggers than arguments,

to

to oppose us. In one single conspiracy, there are three or four others. When the right side shall have been entirely destroyed, then comes the Duke of York, to take possession of the throne; and D'Orleans, who has promised him the throne of France, will then assassinate him. D'Orleans himself will be assassinated by Marat, Danton, and Robespierre, who have made him a promise of the throne. The triumvirs will then share among them, all, smoking, bleeding France. At last, Danton, the ablest of the three, will assassinate the other two, and reign alone, first, under the title of Dictator, afterwards, openly, under that of King. This, you may be sure, is their plan. By sagacious reflection I have found it out: every thing concurs to prove it evidently. See you not how all the circumstances connect and hang together? There is not an event in the Revolution, but is a part and proof of these horrible plots. You are astonished, I see; can you possibly be incredulous?"—I am, indeed, astonished: but, pray, are there many among us, many on your side of the house, who think with you upon this head?—"All, or almost all, are of the same mind. Condorcet once suggested some objections. Sieyes has very little communication with us. Rabaut has a different plan, which, in some particulars, nearly agrees with mine, in others widely differs from it. But none of them is at all more doubtful than I, of the truth of what I have told you. They all feel the necessity of acting with promptitude, of instantly *putting the irons in the fire*, in order to prevent a multitude of crimes and misfortunes, in order

order that we may not lose the benefits of a revolution that has cost us so dear. On the right side, there are members who have not sufficient confidence in you. But, I who have been your colleague, who know you to be an honest man, and a friend to liberty, assure them, that you are of us, and are willing to employ, in our favour, all those means of serving us, which your office has put into your hands. Can you be in the smallest uncertainty in respect to the truth of what I have told you concerning those rascals?"—I should be altogether unworthy of the esteem you express for me, if I could leave you to think, that I fully believe the truth of that plan which you suppose your enemies to have concerted against you. The more facts, persons, and circumstances, you introduce into your accounts of this plan, so much the more probable does it still appear to you, still the more improbable to me. Most of those facts, out of which you make up this imagined plan of conspiracy, have had an obvious intent, which there is no occasion to ascribe fictitiously to them: you, however, attribute to them a purpose which does not naturally appear to belong to them. Yet, to induce us to reject a natural explanation for the sake of one more far-fetched, proofs are requisite, both in opposition to the former, and for the support of the latter. For instance, all the world believed, that La Fayette and D' Orleans were enemies to each other; and that it was in order to deliver Paris, France, and the National Assembly, from many alarms, that D' Orleans was persuaded or compelled by La Fayette, to retire
for

for some time, out of France. You must shew, not only by assertion, but by proofs, *1st*, That they were not enemies ; *2^{dly}*, That they were accomplices : *3^{dly}*, That D' Orleans's retreat to England, was intended for the purpose of carrying their plots into execution. I know that, insisting upon such strength and clearness of proof, may have a tendency to suffer crimes, and misfortunes to come too near, before means are used for preventing and providing against them. But, I know also that, when we give way to all the suggestions of imagination, we are unavoidably betrayed into the folly of theory, in respect to both present and future events : we lose the fit means for discerning through present events, and justly appreciating them. We dream of a thousand crimes and intrigues which no body meditates, and we become blind to those ills which actually menace us. I doubt not but we have many villains among us. When every passion is let loose, and when foreign gold is lavishly offered to corrupt, this must unavoidably happen. But, trust me, their projects, although atrociously wicked, are neither so enlarged, so grand, so comprehensive, so skilfully conceived, nor built upon relations so remote, as you seem to apprehend. They are more robbers and assassins than deep conspirators. The true conspirators against the Republic are the kings of Europe, and the passions of our Republicans. Our armies are more than sufficient to repulse the kings of Europe, with all their regiments. To prevent our passions from accomplishing our overthrow, there is one means, and but one. Without delay, frame
and

and establish a form of government, which may have due energy, and may deserve the confidence of the nation. In that state into which, by your quarrels, the government is fallen, a democracy even of five and twenty millions of angels would soon become a prey to all the fury and discords inspired by pride. As *Jean Jacques* says; we have need of five and twenty millions of gods; but nobody has ever imagined the existence of so many. My dear Salles, men and great assemblies are not so constituted, as if there were on the one hand, none but gods; on the other, none but devils. Wherever mankind are divided by jarring interests and opinions; even the good are not free from the influence of bad passions; and even the bad, if their hearts and purposes be carefully and fairly examined, are not unsusceptible of honest and good impressions. To find within my own breast, a clear and irrefragable proof of at least one half of this truth. I am conscious of meaning as well as any one among you: Yet, when, instead of refuting my opinions with gentleness and sound argument, they are repelled with suspicion and abuse, I am ready to break off farther reasoning, and to look, whether my pistols be charged. You have twice made me minister, and twice have more harmed than served me by so doing. Nothing but a sense of the dangers which environ both you and me, could make me remain at my post. A brave man will not ask a furlough, or give in his resignation on the evening before a battle. The battle, I can foresee, is not far distant. Aware that both sides are likely to fall upon me, I am, notwithstanding, deter-

mined to remain at my post. I shall always declare whatever I may in reason and conscience think true. But, let me forewarn you, that I shall make my own reason and conscience my guides ; not the reason and conscience of any other man upon earth. I should have been indeed very foolishly employed in labouring for thirty years of my life, to light up a lamp for myself, if I could now *suffer* any other man's mind to be a light to guide my paths.

Salles and I, when we parted, grasped each other's hands, and embraced, as if we had still been colleagues in the Constituent Assembly.

My opinion concerning the two sides of the National Convention has been seen in the very first pages of this work. But, as that opinion was founded upon observations, not upon passion, upon facts, not upon dreams ; as most of the evils which men inflict upon one another, find their origin in the manner in which men judge one another ; as Europe which has heard of the right side only from the left side, and of the left side only from the right, cannot interpret this enigma of France, and of human nature : I think it my duty here to deliver my whole opinion, without concealment, or disguise. When the truth is not told in the way of revenge, its declaration can never be an injury. The Legislators who are the most worthy of that august title, are they who recognize truth as the supreme legislator of the world.

Among the members on the right side, whose punishment has shed immortal honour upon their lives and talents ; there were some men, friends dear to my heart,

heart, although more of them were entire strangers to me. In our common intercourse with the world, I had frequently met with BRISSOT; and amid those arrogant, yet frivolous, slaves, whose meanness of mind was partially veiled by their dress and ostentation of luxury; he and I had communicated to each other some of those sentiments which only minds truly free could know, some of those hopes which none but philosophers could conceive. He sought for ideas in books and languages, more than in his own mind. He wrote more than he meditated. His passion for truth, being more ardent than well-grounded in sound reason and true discernment, often entangled him in those quarrels, in which, at first, it is only some doctrine that is the matter of contest,—afterwards, the dispute becomes wholly personal. But amidst extraordinary activity and extreme poverty, his morals had always appeared to me to be simple and pure; his ambition to have no other object but the liberty and welfare of the people. These sentiments, and his turn of mind, were, in him, rather religion than philosophy. Although passionately fond of glory, he would have consented to bury himself in everlasting obscurity, if he might by this have become the PENN of Europe, if he might have converted mankind into a grand congregation of Quakers, if he might have made Paris a Philadelphia. And this man was to die as a *busy-body of intrigue*, as a CONSPIRATOR!

In the month of July 1792, at that very moment when infant-liberty had to contend against the dark plots of one of the Constituted Authorities, which, al-

though felt, could not be seen, I, with Brissot, Gen-
 lonné, Gaudét, Torné, Ducos, Condorcet, Antonelle,
 and Kerfaint, met at several of those dinners, at which
 patriots must concert, how to serve their country ;
 while, at other dinners, tyrants and slaves assemble
 for the purposes of conspiracy. There, all hearts, all
 wishes, all designs, were sincerely republican. We
 saw, not only, that the constitution was violated, but
 that it left still in the hands of one of the Constituted
 Powers, means for its farther violation. The neces-
 sity of a new constitution for the salvation of liberty,
 and that of the abolition of royalty, were acknow-
 ledged by us all. In respect to measures, which it was
 so very difficult to choose wisely, and to pursue steady-
 ly, there were different minds among us. My opinion
 was, that we ought to spare petty assaults ; that we
 ought to make either no attacks, or one grand at-
 tack, too mighty to be resisted ; that hitherto there
 had been always either too little or too much done ;
 that the mob had been tutored to habits of insurrec-
 tion, which debauched them, and taught them to con-
 sider themselves as the nation ; that the King had been
 enabled to represent himself, with some show of truth,
 as an oppressed person, while he was in reality a traitor ;
 and that if insurrection were to break out, the Legisla-
 tive Assembly ought itself to assume the standard,
 and to guide the *efforts* of that insurrection, to en-
 compass the castle with an armed force, called into
 motion by a decree to seal up every paper, and seize
 every document that might afford proofs of Louis's
 treason.

These.

These views were not adopted ; at which, indeed, I was not at all surpris'd. But, I confess, that I should have been exceedingly surpris'd, by the measures which I saw actually pursued ; *had I not been well aware*, from a multitude of historical examples, that, even the soundest minds become fickle, wavering, and uncertain, when they are assailed at every point, by events, of which they cannot discern the causes, but of which the consequences may be terrible ;—*if I had not been aware*, that amidst the war of tempests, even the most skilful pilots, if diffident of their ability to guide the helm, desert it, and vainly put their trust in the winds and waves which are ready to wreck and overwhelm them. To those for whom I had the highest esteem and friendship, I the most ingenuously declared my opinion concerning their conduct ; I have reason to believe, that, on account of it, they but esteemed and loved the more. If I recollect aright, I was about that time informed, that Merlin of Thionville gave the same advice as I. In him, it then appeared to be nothing more than the ebullition of valour and martial intrepidity : But, there are times, when bold, magnanimous counsels, alone, are seasonable.

Almost all the men I have mentioned, were upon the right side of the Convention. I could not perceive it to be guided by any other spirit than that which I had before known them to possess. On that side, therefore, I saw both that republicanism of *sentiment* which scorns to obey any man, unless that man speak in the *name* of the nation, and with the *voice* of the law ; and like-

wife that more rare republicanism of *intellect* which examines all the possible fabrics of human society, in their structure, and in their separate parts; which discerns men to be equal in rights, as in nature; whose inventions and discoveries alone can teach us, how to associate in a great republic, things which appear to be naturally irreconcilable,—equality of rights, with a due submission to the authority of the magistrates,—that active fermentation which alone can develop illustrious characters of all sorts, with constant, immutable, social order,—in the government, a power ever absolute over individuals and over the multitude, with a submission invariably dutiful to the nation at large,—in the executive authority, such state, forms, and useful splendor, as may impress the most reverent ideas of the majesty of the Republic, yet never appear the mere apparatus of the personal dignity of the citizens by whom that majesty is represented.

On the right side also, I saw those men who were the best acquainted with the doctrines of political œconomy which teach how to open all the sluices, and to deepen all the channels, of public and private wealth; scrupulously to fill the national treasury with those portions which the fortune of every private citizen owes to it; to create new springs and streams for the production and circulation of private wealth, by making use of the contributions raised for the expenditure of the national government; to protect and untetter every species of industry, without treating any one with partial favour; to regard large fortunes, not as those stagnant, useless lakes, which receive and

retain

retain all the water poured into them from the surrounding hills, but as so many dams and ponds, which are necessary to multiply and to invigorate the germs of the general fecundity, and to diffuse their moisture from one eminence, and one hollow, still to another, till all that is dry, shall have been watered, and all that is barren, shall have been fertilized. These were the admirable doctrines which gained freedom to trade, and to the arts, before it was introduced into government. Their nature is perfectly congenial to the nature of republics alone. These doctrines can alone establish EQUALITY on a lasting foundation, not by enjoining a general and sordid frugality, that must be subject to continual violation, and which would rather fetter industry, than restrain men's appetite for luxurious indulgence; but in placing every family, and every individual, in easy circumstances; in those labours of which the diversified ingenuity, and the incessant renewal, are, happily for liberty, alone sufficient to give full scope and exercise to that turbulent activity of democracy, which, after long afflicting, at length dissolved, the republics of antiquity, amid those storms and tempests with which their atmosphere was always vexed and obscured.

On the right side, were five or six men, whose genius was capable of comprehending, or rather of conceiving, at first, the vast theories of social order and political œconomy; and with those, many other men who were not unable to understand and propagate their principles. There too, had enlisted themselves a certain number of fluctuating, impetuous violent tempers

and minds, which, after running the round of the artifices and extravagancies of the demagogue, were now ambitious for nothing more, than to disavow and to oppose those fooleries which they had eagerly disseminated. On that same side, likewise, in the same manner as persons of piety take their place at the foot of the altar ;—all those men of calm passions, of respectable fortune, and of decent education, naturally seated themselves, who were disposed to do honour to that republic which preserved their tranquillity, by the exercise of every private virtue, by their good-natured benevolence, by their contented happiness.

Turning my contemplation from this right side to the left,—to the Mountain ;—What a contrast presented itself? There I saw a man bustling with the most turbulent activity, whose copper (*bell-fire-smoke*) coloured countenance looked, as if he had just issued from the dens of the anthropophagi, or from the *infernal regions* ; whose quick, convulsive, interrupted pace appeared to be that of a condemned assassin who had escaped out of the hands of the executioner, but whose breast was still goaded by all the furies,—one of those demonized human beings, who would annihilate the whole human race, in order to deliver themselves from that terror with which the very sight of man, impresses them. Under the despotism which he had not power to deluge with blood, as he afterwards deluged the liberty of France, that man aspired to accomplish a revolution in science ; and by dull, yet daring, systems, he had been seen to attack the grandest discoveries of modern times, or
of

of the human mind. His eyes roving over the history of all ages, had stopped with complacency, only upon the lives of four or five illustrious destroyers, who changed cities into desarts, in order, afterwards, to repeople those desarts with beings like themselves, or like the tyger. This was all he remembered of the annals of mankind ; all that he knew, all that he was desirous to imitate. By an instinct, resembling that of beasts of prey, rather than by any deep penetration into the corruption of human nature, he had been enabled to see how easily possible it is, to hurry to the highest extravagance of folly, and to the utmost enormity of vice,—a great people who have just burst asunder the bands of superstition and despotism. It was his knowledge of this, which dictated all his papers, all his harangues, all his actions ; yet, he fell but by the hand of a woman ! and more than fifty thousand statues of him, were erected within the Republic !

Beside him, fat men who would not, of themselves, have contrived deeds of such atrocity ; but who being by an act of extreme audacity, embarked with him, on the streams of events whose mighty and headlong course stunned and confounded, while its dangers terrified them ; had already acted upon those maxims of the monster, which they disavowed, and were not averse from being thought capable of following them still. They beheld Marat with horrors ; yet could, without reluctance, make him the instrument of their purposes. They set him in the midst of them, they put him at their head, they wore him as a petrifying Medusa's head, upon their bosoms. The terror of such

a man was universal : every where the trembling citizen seemed to see him : it was as if Marat had been the whole Mountain ! and as if the whole Mountain had been Marat !—Among the other leaders, there were certainly several who found no other fault with the crimes of Marat, but that they were too openly, too undisguisedly perpetrated.

But even among the leaders,—and here it is that respect to truth, obliges me to differ in opinion from many persons whose worth I esteem,—among the leaders, there were many whom circumstances and events, rather than any community of sentiments, had connected with the rest ; and whose designs and wishes were sorrowfully and earnestly turned to regard the voice of wisdom and the sighs of humanity, who would have exhibited many virtues, and would have done much service to the common-weal, as soon as they should have been believed to be capable of so much. To the Mountain, as to a post of military service and danger, resorted all who had an ardent passion for liberty, but were little skilled in the theory of political freedom : All who thought equality to be threatened, or actually injured by dignity of thought and elegance of language ! all those who entering now, for the first time, into the career of the revolution, were impatient to display that impetuosity and violence on which the glory of almost all the foremost agitators of the the revolution, was built ; all they whose youth made them fitter to serve the Republic in her armies than in the sanctuary of her laws ; and who, having seen the Republic rise to light, amid the clashing of arms,
and

and the cannon's roar, fancied that her existence was still to be preserved, and her decrees to be promulgated by the same means. To the left side, too, repaired for an asylum, rather than for a place of service, several deputies who had been brought up in the proscribed casts of the nobility and the priesthood, and who, although pure in their principles, fled to the heights of the Mountain, to escape those accusations to which they must have been exposed, if more moderate in their principles: Thither also repaired, to nurse their suspicions, and to live amid the gloomy delusions of a sombrous imagination, those solemn, melancholy characters, who, having too often experienced the insincerity of modern politeness, cannot give their confidence to virtue unless it be surly, or to liberty unless she be savage! There were likewise seated some men to whose minds the severer sciences had communicated an asperity, as well as a correctness of principles, and who, in their pride of possessing knowledge which was directly applicable to the mechanical arts, and to the purposes of the artisan, disdainfully withdraw themselves from those philosophers and men of letters whose knowledge is not so readily serviceable to the smith or the dyer, but must enlighten the whole society, before it can descend to the individual: There also were naturally to be found all those men, who, whatever their abilities, and accomplishments, were yet, from an overstraining of their powers, disposed rather to exceed than to fall short of the due limits of revolutionary energy and emotion.

Such

Such was the idea I had formed of the elements of the two sides of the National Convention.

Judging of each side, by the majority of its elements ; both sides appeared to me capable of serving the Republic, highly, but in different ways and different degrees. The right side was qualified to organize the internal constitution and government, with dignity and wisdom. The left side were fitted to inspire all France with the same republican passions with which they were themselves inflamed, and which were needful to a nation assailed on all hands, by all the kings and soldiers of Europe

On the right side I saw most of the genius of the Republic : on the left, more of true republican enthusiasm. I did not fail to perceive that genius alone could save and build up the Republic, which, as yet, existed only in the decrees of the Convention ; and that passionate enthusiasm, acting either solely, or with predominant influence, must unavoidably ruin it. The left side, therefore, although never an object of my suspicion, held me under continual apprehensions. I there saw some of the leaders openly rank deeds of popular outrage and atrocity, among the necessary revolutionary measures : I saw the majority of them to be under the influence of those biases and passions which are easily hurried into every outrageous crime, that can be sanctified by names which may disguise its atrocity : I saw the whole party very much disposed to make their duty and their glory consist in sometimes inflaming the fury of the multitude ; and sometimes obeying its headlong impulse. This side had

had been called the MOUNTAIN; and I often observed that it was, most certainly, a *volcanic Mountain*. It was, in fact, a *volcano*, which incessantly emitted head-long streams of angry and consuming passions, which had been kindled into a conflagration, by the sudden imagination of a grand Republic, arising in the midst of mankind, by a revolution which while it restored every ravished right, broke asunder every confining fetter. But, amid the deluge of lava which it poured forth, there was a mixture of fine and precious minerals which were reduced into fusion by the flames threatening universal desolation. The matters were all inflammable; but not all incendiary. Could they have been parted, the conflagration might have been prevented. A plan for *parting*, was conceived, but terrified its very projectors. That is well known to have been no sooner formed, than abandoned.

After this project was relinquished, there remained, as I shall ever continue to think, but one part that could be reasonably taken; and this was,—not to irritate those too dangerous men who could not be expelled from the Convention,—not to throw out threats against men whom it was not possible to ruin, and whose desperate audacity was capable of daring every thing.

Had there been but passion on the one side, and on the other, only genius and prudence; the contests of the two parties must soon have ceased; or the right side must soon have become permanently victorious! for, at least two-thirds of the left side, would have passed over to it. The main body of the left side
would

would soon have deserted their unworthy leaders; those chiefs who hurried into the guilt of the most atrocious crimes—men who, although violent in temper and character, were not base,—who, although dangerous, were not void of generosity.

Unfortunately, upon the right side, from which the Republic ought to have obtained every sacrifice, because upon that side were its most sanguine hopes built; there was a number of men, who were not less blindly obstinate in their prejudices, than incorruptibly devoted to the discharge of their duty; some men of abilities who delighted in political contest, because it afforded them opportunities of distinguishing themselves in debate, and in the newspapers; and two or three men of exalted genius, whose whole souls were impregnated with those ardent passions which inflame imagination, and are in their turn inflamed by it.

There are virtues the peculiar growth of a republic; and which its founders may not have possessed. There is one virtue, no where to be found but in the origin of new religions, and in the republics of antiquity: It consists in the renunciation of private passions, that heroic self-denial, which is never exercised unless for the sake of an unknown God, who is just supposed to have revealed himself, and of a country which has been from infancy to manhood, the object of our adoration. When both sides of the Convention acted under the influence of private passions; it was no longer one only, but both sides, that were in the wrong. Had I not seen this, myself, several times, I should not have believed it. By men of worth, there
were

were produced against men atrociously worthless and criminal, accusations, so far from being true, that they were not even probable.

In order to have a clear discernment into affairs which are passing; we ought to be neither too near the scene of action, nor at too great a distance from it. Too near, the eye has not distinct vision; at too great a distance, the object disappears. In the contests in the National Convention, there were circumstances which distant spectators could not see even with the most piercing eyes; and which the combatants themselves could not distinctly discover, because they were the agents among whom these things passed. I was not better qualified, but only better situate, in a more advantageous point of view, for seeing every thing in its true size and colours. There were some secret emotions and designs of the two parties, which could not escape my observation; these might be sometimes only the mere shading of the picture, but such a shading as gives to existences their characteristic features, and to events all their efficacy. For instance, the two sides constantly and mutually accused one another of conspiracy against the Republic; they attributed to each other, the conspiracies of d'Orleans and Dumourier, and every other form of conspiracy that could possibly be feared or imagined; just as in a dispute, when once there is an end to the civilities of good-breeding, pride and anger move the parties to reproach one another for obstinacy and folly. It was just as easy to say of a legislator, that he was an accomplice in a conspiracy, as it would be, to say of a writer whom you dislike,

dislike, that he is a blockhead. Why was so serious an accusation produced from either side of the Convention, without proofs?

The following is what I imagined that I could perceive to be the truth, in this case.

Had the right side accused the left, merely of barbarity and ignorance, of substituting fury for energy, of confounding the passions of man, which are to be restrained, with the rights of man, which are to be vindicated and established; of reducing the rich to poverty, and the poor to indigence, by a wild idea of equality of fortunes, which can never produce aught but equality in misery; of exposing the Republic to danger by the very extravagance of their republicanism: These accusations, far from ruining the left side, would perhaps have but augmented the lustre of their character, their popularity, and their influence; would have made them only so much the more dear to that multitude who are not the nation, but whose clamours resound on every quarter, while the genuine voice of the nation is but rarely heard. Besides, these reproaches might indeed have served to dishonour our legislators in the estimation of every reasoning, thinking being upon earth. But in the particular state in which our affairs then stood, there was a different accusation requisite to ruin them, in France, and especially at Paris: The accusation of *a conspiracy against the Republic*, was, alone, adequate to this purpose.

If the left side had accused the right, of nothing more than a desire to exalt the power and pride of cultivated genius, to the same invidious pre-eminence, which

which the pride and power of the throne had held; of wishing to bound the rights of man within a circle too narrow for his passions; of endeavouring to establish the new art of social institution, upon principles which ignorance cannot readily comprehend;—political economy upon laws, which would not give competent plenty to the nation, till after they had first raised the possessors of property to a condition of too haughty prosperity; of striving to discover a species of government under which all the actions of private individuals, as of the body social, may be, although firm and free, yet not fiery and impetuous. Such imputations might indeed have armed some men of furious passions against the Right Side, but would not have served to excite even the mob of Paris to an insurrection. To effect this, there was required a far different charge—the charge of *conspiring against the Republic*.

At first, these mutual accusations were probably nothing more than the suspicions of hatred, or the outrageous abuse of transported rage. They were at last, on both sides, believed with earnest conviction: And then it was that I began to tremble for the Convention, and for the Republic.

The men who thus mutually accused one another of the most atrocious criminality, seemed unwilling to keep any measures with one another, and thought it their most sacred duty to accomplish the ruin and death of their enemies. The one party talked of nothing but rising in an insurrection against ambitious rulers; the other proposed to commit the sword of national

justice into the hands of judges who should be able to convict and cut off all anarchists and royalists. The object of the question of the order of the day, long was, to ascertain which of the two sides should organize and compose the Revolutionary New Court of Justice; and this in the opinion of many, was to decide, who should send, who be sent to the scaffold. While the forms of judiciary massacres, of legal acts of injustice, were brought to be determined upon; the general cry in the streets, in companies, from the rostra of the Convention, was, *The salvation of our country.* The sacred name of Brutus was invoked by men, whose souls were inflamed merely by a rage for assassination. Each day there was some new massacre resolved upon, for the day following; nor were these threats always uttered among the Jacobins: nay, it was sometimes against the Jacobins they were directed, &c &c. It was no longer possible to put a stop to such disorders by denunciation; they were openly, loudly spoken of; instead of being concealed, they were made the subjects of boasting; they had long been the favourite topics of discourse in the popular societies, in the *sections*, in some of the daily papers. Alas! even they, whose sentiments and conduct have been at all times the most pure, would be confounded with horror, if the primary and genuine source of that furious language which was strikingly expressive of fury of mind,—should be displayed to them. From the very beginning of this almost total eclipse of all the light of reason, and all the beamings of humanity; I had been deeply impressed with a persuasion, that all those tumultuous

mutuous storms originated from the divisions in the National Convention ; that if these could be quieted, all else would be restored to quiet : that if their rage could be even for a time suspended, the rest would be suspended with them : that out of the sphere of the Convention, such bad men as might be capable of projecting any desperate enterprise against their country, would, however, be, by themselves, unable to carry any such enterprise into execution ; that all would easily and readily yield to the authority of the National Convention, acting with unanimity ; and that from its bosom alone could arise any political storms, sufficiently terrible to shake the safety of the Convention itself, and of all France.

I was also persuaded, that in the Convention, the men the most to be dreaded were not they from whom no good and honest sentiments, nothing but villainy and outrage—is ever to be expected ; but that the most formidable were men, who being at once capable of great actions, and liable to great errors, saw all their purposes, even where these were excellent, outrageously vilified and opposed : who, when they sought to take a part in good deeds, were harassed with the accusation of crimes which could not be proved ; who being unjustly confounded with men of hardened villainy, might, at one moment or another, be tempted to act the guilt attributed to them, for the purpose of averting that stroke of public justice with which they were threatened in every discourse, and in every newspaper.

These ideas, were as so many points of illumination to guide my conduct amid the general darkness with which all was environed ; a darkness haunt-

ed by all the fiends of hate, of terror, and of rage. The grand purpose to which all my endeavours were directed, was, to clear up suspicion, and to mitigate hatred. For this end, I employed not address and political cunning, but the dictates of virtue and the principles of truth, recommended by the winning language of benevolence. I strove, with unwearied diligence, to bring together, in my own house, or in other places, those members of the Convention, who had, at that time, the greatest influence on the two sides, and whose union might have brought about the union of their parties. While they saw one another only in the Assembly,—this was to meet no where except on the arena; and rarely has peace been conciliated on the field of battle. The dinners I gave were frequently subjects of calumny at the meetings of the Jacobins. But this was no more than what I had expected. I could not hope that insidious calumny should remark, how different were my dinner-parties from those which consisted of Jacobins, or of Girondines, exclusively. Obligated even by my official duties to have frequent interviews, sometimes with members belonging to the right side, sometimes with others who belonged to the left; I never said to those of the left side, *They of the right are aristocrates and royalists*; I never said to those on the right side, that, *They of the left were a band of conspirators and anarchists*. To them all I said, *The two sides mortally hate each other, but both love the Republic; in my opinion, one of them is better skilled than the other, in the principles of social order, but both are friends to order, so far as they have distinct conceptions of its nature: neither of*
them

them are either anarchists in system, or royalists in any scheme of intrigue : yet anarchy may be prolonged, royalty may be re-established, by the contentions of the two sides.

I can call, here, upon all those members for their testimony, of whatever party or opinions, with whom I ever held any conversation relative to those important concerns of the Republic. Of those who survive, there is, however, one in particular, with whom I had a conversation, of which the remembrance remains indelibly impressed upon my mind, because it was very long, and because it passed in the presence of Pache, a man whose accomplice I have been suspected to be. The deputy whom I here call upon is Thibault ; I appeal to his memory, and his conscience. Let him declare in what terms I spoke in the presence of Pache, to whom he himself talked as became a man of worth and courage, of those deputies who were prosecuted by the Community of Paris : Let him declare, whether, while I blamed their passions, I did not bear faithful testimony to their republican virtues.

To the members of the two sides of the Convention, I spoke not merely of those events in which they themselves were agents, and of which we might all fall victims. The events which were passing before us, reminded me of others which I had treasured up in my recollection ; and I recalled their attention to what had happened in former times, in order that I might make comparisons, and draw inferences such as should afford important instruction in respect to our conduct amidst the present affairs. By a multitude of facts from history, I proved, that party-spirit, which can hardly ever be altogether banished from

among a free people, must be much more baneful to a people who have not yet acquired the advantage of a stable constitution, than to those who enjoy a constitution fully framed and established. Among the latter, said I, party-spirit, by its action and re-action, preserves the energy of the springs of government. Among the former, it impedes the very fabrication of the machine, and hinders its parts from assuming their due proportions, and from learning to act with their proper powers. In England, for instance, the parties of *Ministry* and *Opposition* are not confined to the Parliament alone, but extend throughout all the three kingdoms: yet each party know what they themselves desire, and what it is their opponents would have. The party of *Opposition* evidently strive to strengthen the powers of Parliament, while the Minister's party endeavour to augment the executive authority of the Crown. These are the two centres of motion, towards which every thing on each side continually gravitates. Even the parties are, in some sort, *constituted*; their struggles are *organized*. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, gains ground. But, on neither side are the barriers very strong or very lofty; and there is, accordingly, a certain circle, within which the two parties may alternately advance and recede, without endangering the safety of the constitution. Whenever the constitution of the British government shall be really and greatly violated, that violation will be the signal for the combat, and the triumph of liberty; for although there be in Britain two parties, there is but one attached to liberty. Liberty

erty is the darling of every Briton, without exception. Were it not for this agitation, the fortunate shocks of which are perhaps necessary to the climate and the melancholy temperament of the inhabitants of Britain; were it not for this play of hopes and fears, which interests, but does not distress them; they would perhaps think less of their constitution, would observe, would know it less; nay, they would less observe and know themselves. There, that party-spirit, which perhaps hinders the constitution from being improved to perfection, nevertheless supports its existence, and diffuses through the whole body of the nation, that knowledge, which, if not the brightest, and most lively, is, however, the most directly useful.

On the other hand, behold what terrible effects party-spirit has usually produced wherever it has taken root in a republic as yet destitute of a government. Open but Machiavel's History of Florence: Read, if you can, without shuddering with horror. There, while the constitution was not yet formed, and dissension arose among the citizens when they were framing it; their quarrels had no distinct, determinate, immutable object. The parties did not attach themselves respectively to different powers in the constitution. They were exasperated with deadly rage against one another. The contention was not for the purpose of determining what principle, what spring ought to predominate, but to decide what family should obtain the supreme authority. When one family was extirpated, or peace was otherwise restored; the rival ambition of other fami-

lies soon renewed the war. None knew the views of their enemies : There were few who knew their own : not design, but the fury of passion guided their conduct. But, for this very reason, that they had no precise views, they mutually ascribed to one another always the most horrible, the most criminal views they could imagine. As party still succeeded to party ; as each party was continually divided and subdivided ; the moment soon arrived, when all union between the members of any faction, was entirely dissolved ; the nation was itself dissolved ; the parties no more existed ; nothing was to be seen but unconnected individuals wandering about, with reciprocal fury and terror, each viewing all around him at once with the trembling looks of fear, and with the threatening glances of rage : The sword, the weapon of battle, was worn no more ; but in its stead, the dagger, the instrument of assassination. Truth, virtue disappeared ; each word was a lie, each deed a vice, or a crime. Even genius, betrayed by experience, its most faithful guide, learned to look upon justice as a chimera, and enunciated in profound precepts, and taught in systematic arrangement, the accursed doctrine of tyranny and imposture. That unfortunate republic was reduced to such distress, that it could no longer find an asylum against itself, elsewhere than in the tomb of despotism. The gates of that tomb opened before it : It rushed in, and found itself relieved.

And does this misery, which in Florence extended its effects to all Italy, which in France would affect
the

the interests of all mankind, does it impress your minds with little terror, because you see it only at a distance, and because you confide in the good genius, and the good fortune of France? Behold then, at hand, at your very side, a danger which already touches, which presses upon you. I find this danger likewise foretold in the same history of Florence. I have marked the page for our reading.

“ The Florentines provided for their defence; and
 “ the principal citizens took up arms. Of the number were the *Albizzi* and the *Ricci*, two rival families, who strove for the exclusion each of the other, and desired each to engross all the offices of the magistracy for itself alone. Hitherto they had displayed their mutual hatred, only in the councils, in which they warmly opposed each other's opinions. But, when the whole town was in arms, they were then on the point of coming to blows, and because a false report was propagated of their having marched against each other, each of the two families thought themselves attacked by the other, and they actually marched.”

Amidst our convulsions, the two sides of the Convention appeared to me to be mutually threatened by each other. But, my fears were more especially for the right side. Their danger was the most immediate, because the force of their enemies party was already in the midst of them. From their able intelligence, too, I had the greatest expectations of prudence in conduct. And to members belonging to them, therefore,

fore, did I the most earnestly address my communications and intreaties.

How often have I conjured Brissot, whose talents acquired new energy amid the heats of contest ! how often have I conjured him, rather to avoid putting forth all his strength, than to irritate his enemies more and more, by heaping confusion upon their heads ! How often have I intreated Guadet, sometimes at least to forego the triumphs of that eloquence which derives its power from the passions, but which never fails to foment and inflame them !

To overturn the throne, said I to them, you yourselves have excited, or excused, the commotions and excesses of the Parisian populace. They are now habituated to insurrection. We must win them from it. But, an evil habit can never be laid aside so quickly as it is caught. If you now, constantly threaten those same passions which before you always protected, because you have now become wise, the multitude will think you traitors. It is not with the whip in hand that we take the fiery horse, which we intend to restrain with the bridle. Since we have now no real government, we ought not to be surprised, that the multitude will not submit to be governed. Impose the yoke of the laws gently, but firmly upon their necks ; and clamour less about anarchy. Do not for ever threaten with the sword of justice, men of whom, indeed, some are no doubt villains, but among whom there are, certainly, several who have at this time more power in Paris, than either

ther law or justice has. Exaggerate not their crimes ; for, by so doing, you can only lead people to suppose them guiltless of any real crime. Do not confound with the guilty, men, who, although violent *Mountainneers* in their sentiments, are however perfectly innocent ; for, by this, you will bring the whole *Mountain* to be believed equally innocent. There are some awful truths, for the sake even of which alone, we ought to know every thing thoroughly, and to ponder it deeply. In great democracies, particularly at their origin, the multitude ever lend their confidence, their love, their power, more readily to those who speak the language of their passions, than to those who speak the language of reason, which they cannot comprehend. The defender of the excesses which they commit, is even dearer to them than the defender of their rights. Do not unnecessarily provoke a contest for the sake of interests, which are not the interests of liberty and the Republic, and in which your enemies will not fail to employ against you, arms which you yourselves have whetted in former times.

To Genfonné, who never doubted the purity of all my intentions, and whom, notwithstanding the natural obstinacy of his character, I more than once drew to my way of thinking, concerning circumstances, and the conduct they required : To him I held a different language.

I said to him :

“ You think yourself certain, that all France will
 “ rise and hasten to your defence. But, consider, that,
 “ even upon this supposition, your force is dispersed
 “ throughout all France, while that of your enemies

“ is

“ is assembled in Paris. In an instant, they may
 “ strike a blow against you ; but months would be
 “ requisite to enable you to collect your defenders.
 “ What ! the Jacobins are against you ; nay, the
 “ Community of Paris is against you ; and yet would
 “ you, in Paris, engage in a combat with enemies who
 “ are all-powerful at the Jacobin-club, and in the com-
 “ munity ? Have you forgotten, that all sorts of force
 “ are in the Community’s hands ; and that, of its
 “ powers, it owes several to yourselves. It was upon
 “ your motion, Genfonné, that the Legislative As-
 “ sembly granted to the Community of Paris the *power*
 “ *of arrest* ; and by the exercise of this terrible power,
 “ which it owes to yourself, it may at any time throw
 “ into prison, or absolutely overawe by terror, all who
 “ shall be inclined to prefer the right side to the left,
 “ Genfonné to Marat. The armed force of Paris is
 “ at the disposal of the Community ; and being so,
 “ cannot be at the disposal of the Convention,—will
 “ be infallibly against you, if you shall have recourse
 “ to force of arms, while you avoid referring to this
 “ last resource. All those powers were bestowed to
 “ arm the Community against the King and royalty.
 “ Now, when the royalty exists no longer, with what
 “ degree of prudence can you leave the Community
 “ in possession of authority so enormous ? Either with-
 “ draw from it those powers with which it has been im-
 “ prudently invested ; or, at least, be not so much more
 “ imprudent, and that with so much greater danger,
 “ as to give the alarm for battle to your enemies with
 “ whom it is in alliance. What meant you, what was it
 “ you

“ you actually did, when you carried Marat before the
 “ Revolutionary Tribunal? Your wish certainly was, to
 “ gain a triumph to justice and to the Republic: instead
 “ of this the event has been to both nothing but af-
 “ fliction and disgrace: Marat has gained the triumph.
 “ Be assured, that the Republic, when exalted and esta-
 “ blished upon a firm basis, will not fail to efface,
 “ from the glorious list of her founders, those men
 “ who have sought to set her foundations upon atro-
 “ cious crimes. At present, she has not energy suffi-
 “ cient to purify herself. Any attempts which you
 “ should make to precipitate this dangerous operation,
 “ would but tend to work her overthrow. Phocion
 “ was not less friendly than Demosthenes, to the
 “ glory and liberty of the Republic to which they be-
 “ longed: He was much better qualified to lead its
 “ armies to victory: Yet he checked and restrained
 “ the ardour of the Athenians, when they were in-
 “ cessantly roused by Demosthenes, to declare war
 “ against Philip. Experience at last shewed which of
 “ the two, whether Philip or Demosthenes, was in
 “ the right. The sages of Europe will no doubt
 “ discern your reasons for the conduct you observe
 “ towards legislators who are unworthy of sharing
 “ with you this glorious title: and they would assu-
 “ redly blame you, if, by too great impatience to
 “ perform a few acts of national justice, you should
 “ bring the nation, and even justice itself, into dan-
 “ ger. Cicero, whose name you often invoke, pro-
 “ secuted Catiline and his accomplices, without re-
 “ laxation, and without pity, till he had them put
 “ to

“ to death almost under his own eye. But, Catiline
 “ and his accomplices more than dishonoured the
 “ Republic : they conspired against it : Cicero had
 “ the proofs of their conspiracy in his hands. It be-
 “ came necessary either to put them to death, or to
 “ suffer them to massacre the senate, and burn a part
 “ of the city. But, mark with what prudence,—
 “ prudence which men of less sagacity would have
 “ thought weakness or cowardice,—the same Cicero
 “ acted in respect to his colleague in the consulate,
 “ a colleague whom he had procured for himself,
 “ although he knew him to be immoral, unprincipled,
 “ and in all respects more worthy of being the ac-
 “ complice of Catiline, than the colleague of Cicero.
 “ Mark how, in order to lay asleep the more dan-
 “ gerous vices of that colleague, Cicero even flatter-
 “ ed his ambition ;—how this great man availed him-
 “ self of the very vices of a beggar, accidentally exalt-
 “ ed to the highest dignities, in order to make him,
 “ for a moment, a useful instrument in the service of
 “ the Republic.

“ My dear Gensonné, here is the model of a *states-*
 “ *man*, in a man of genius and of virtue. We may
 “ talk in high-sounding phrases of the more inflexible
 “ virtue of Cato. But, there is nothing finer in
 “ writing than the periods of Cicero ; there was no-
 “ thing more wise and beneficent in policy than his
 “ conduct. I am well pleased with any skilful at-
 “ tempts to imitate the glowing and passionate elo-
 “ quence of Cicero : But, I should wish also to see his
 “ prudent and able conduct carefully imitated. Con-
 “ sider,

"sider, my friend, that the Republic of France has
 "been produced previous to the virtues which are
 "necessary to maintain its duration. Reflect, that as
 "yet we have rather good principles, than actually
 "good morals and manners, and that our principles
 "are rather promulgated only than thoroughly
 "known: Think that, if war break out between
 "the legislators who have levelled the throne, and
 "legislators who are more profoundly skilled in the
 "theory of government; then, in the present state
 "of the public mind, ninety-nine hundredth parts of
 "the nation will turn, not to the side of those who
 "possess the most enlarged intelligence, but to the
 "side of those whose arm has accomplished the mightiest effects. They may, perhaps, give you a day
 "of tears and statues. But, if you enter voluntarily
 "into contests, which I think, you may avoid: they
 "may then probably begin with bringing you to the
 "scaffold. Consider that, in the Executive Council,
 "you have friends; and that you yet leave the Executive Council as powerless as if it were the Council of a Monarch: That, on the other hand, you
 "have enemies in the Community, and yet leave the
 "Community in possession of a force superior to all
 "restraint, just as if there were still a king in Paris.
 "When you manage matters so ill, it is a sort of
 "madness to think that they can turn out, eventually,
 "favourable for you."

What I said to Genfonné, with all the amplification,
 and enlarged detail of a man speaking to a man whom
 he

he loves, and for whose welfare he is afraid, even that I explained also, with a degree of clearness which could not be mistaken, to the National Convention itself.

At an evening *sederunt*, when the Executive Council were giving an account of some disturbances which had taken place, I said, without any ambiguity, that the Executive Council could not be responsible for what might happen, because it was in possession of no means, of no force, with which it might make itself master of events, might command and direct them. Genfonné that instant arose to require, that the armed force should be intrusted to the Executive Council; Robespierre hurrying from the height of the *Mountain*, ascended the *Cathedra*, and demanded permission to speak to the safety of liberty, of the people, of the rights of man. The quarrel was rising to a terrible height. Genfonné did not feel that he had sufficient firmness to go through it with advantage; and withdrew his motion, which had hardly gained a hearing. I know not if the *Journalists* observed these movements, and the intentions with which they were made: I know not whether there was any account given of them in the newspapers: I know not if there be any persons now living, who witnessed, and who remember the fact: but it is nevertheless true; and I have often spoken of it to many of those who take notice of events as they pass.

It was for the same reason, that becoming daily more and more sensible, that the Executive Council was destitute of all authority, I was the first to propose

propose its suppression ; I was the first to request the Convention to assume into their own hands, and to exercise by the ministration of their Committees, the direction of all the forces of Paris, and the execution of the laws of the Republic.

This proposal, in opposition to which all the host of prejudices, under the character of principles, then indignantly arose ; had been made by me before the month of February. I several times renewed it, when addressing myself to the Committee of General Safety. The majority of the Convention were then good men ; and its decrees were the dictates of wisdom. The same majority which then enacted good laws, would have composed good Committees of Government ; the force of Paris would have been removed out of the hands of the community ; the fate of the Convention and of the Republic would have depended altogether upon the majority of the Convention : And our misfortunes, and the misfortunes of the Convention, have not proceeded from the exercise of that boundless power by its majority, which I desired to confer upon them ; but, from this, that the Convention, or, which is the same thing, the majority, not having at that time assumed this power ; it was of consequence usurped by the minority who exercised it first by the intervention of the Community, afterwards directly by themselves, and at last suffered it to be engrossed by half-a-dozen members of the Committees, who exercised universal oppression, yet, without assuming the appellation of Committees of Government.

Such were my opinions, my sentiments, my wishes,

H

my

my language. I might perhaps be entirely mistaken. But, I must say, that I was free from the influence of prejudice, and of private interest ; and my attention was unremittingly fixed upon the combinations and collisions of interests and passions which were taking place upon the great scene before me, and on the progress of events.

I have unfolded what I thought : Let me now relate what I did.

The mutual threats of the two sides, different in nature, but equally violent, became every day more terrible and alarming. They were as two armies encamped over against each other, impatient to meet in fight, and watching each, only for advantages of time and circumstances, in order to strike the first blow.

The evening of the 9th or 10th of March, seemed to precipitate the career of events, so as to urge them to a speedy catastrophe.

The news of the defection of Dumourier, which were, on the same day, received, made gloomy and unfavourable impressions upon the public imagination. From one act of treachery, occasion was taken to excite suspicions of a thousand others, and to infer the probability of all from the truth of one. Dumourier's former intimacy with Brissot and the deputies of the Gironde, had been long since succeeded by a resentment which they could scarcely retain within the limits of that respect which was due from the general of the army, to the legislators of the commonwealth, and of that decent treatment which the legislators owed to a general by whose services the Republic was triumphant.

But,

But, their enemies pretended to believe them still united; in order that they might hence have a pretext to destroy them together, to join them in the same proscription. That indignation which Dumourier deserved by his conduct in Belgium, was at Paris turned against Brissot and the deputies of the Gironde.

I observed this management and its effects. I expected some commotions to arise. I watched their origin, and the direction which was given them.

About seven o'clock in the evening, in the house appropriated for the business of my office, in which I then was; I heard a tumultuous confusion of songs of savage joy, and cries of threatening fury, resound through the streets, and pass from one part to another. I soon understood the noise to proceed from an armed troop, which after intoxicating themselves at an entertainment given by the *Section de la Halle*, were marching to the Hall of the Jacobins. My first reflection suggested the propriety of my immediately joining my colleagues.

I hastened to wait upon Claviere, but found him not at home. I then repaired to the *office* for foreign *affairs*, where I found Lebrun, Bournonville, Brissot, and Genfonné: Claviere soon joined us. We there took measures in order to obtain certain information of what was going on; and considered, what conduct we ought ourselves to hold. The Convention was met for the discussion of a plan for the organization of a *Revolutionary Tribunal*. The plan proposed by the left side was, by the right, rejected with horror. The seditious commotions which had arisen in several

streets, might have a purpose still more criminal ; but it was natural to suppose that their object must be, to compel those who opposed the plan, to give their votes for the institution of the new tribunal, and in favour of those extraordinary forms of procedure which were proposed for it. Such expedients have been but too frequently employed during the whole revolution ; even good decrees have been passed under the influence of such unworthy means.

Reports from different quarters, but all of the same tenor, acquainted us, that when the troops had filed into the hall of the Jacobins, a man proceeding from among them, had ascended the *rostra*, and in words of extravagant fury, and with the voice of an African or a Bergamasco, had suggested some designs of atrocious wickedness and barbarity ; proposing that the troop should divide itself into two parts ; of which one should forthwith repair to the Convention, to avenge the people by inflicting instant death on their faithless Representatives ; while the other should go against the Executive Council, and *should clear the house*, by massacring all the ministers. These propositions, as we were *informed*, had been received with the loudest applauses ; and sabres were brandished in the air, in testimony of the assent of the whole troop to the execrable motion ; until a member of the society, substituted, instead of the massacre of the deputies and ministers, the idea, that for the present, they should rather be seized and imprisoned, without the use of farther violence against them. But, at the very moment when this amendment was going to be

be put to the vote, Dubois-Crancé entered the hall of the Jacobins, and instantly opposing both the amendment and the original motion with all the horror and alarm, which it was natural for both to excite, procured their rejection even by those who had come to support and applaud it. Still, however, it was added, many of them had gone away in such a rage, that there was reason to fear, they would go elsewhere to wreak their fury.

I proposed two different things as fit to be done at this critical moment.

One was, that we should proceed to the Executive Council ; declare our *federunt* permanent ; call upon the Constituted Authorities of Paris, to whose requisition the armed force was subject ; and make them give, in our own presence, such orders as we should judge to be the most proper for protecting the safety of the Representatives of the People, and the public peace. My *other* proposal was, that, if the former could not be carried into *effect*, we should repair to the Convention ; should procure it to call upon the Mayor of Paris, the president of the department, and the commandant of the armed force ; and should thus add to the necessary measures of police, all the gravity, force, and dignity of decisions of the legislature.

Neither of these propositions was adopted ;—the *first* being rejected because the principal members of the *Constituted Authorities*, were suspected to be accomplices with the *ruffians* engaged in the insurrection ; and because, if it were actually so, with every means in their hands to deceive us, they would have

but derived from our calling upon them—a new advantage for striking with a surer aim the blow they meditated against us :—the *second*, because the members destined for assassination, were not then present in the Convention, and were in no danger, during the whole night.

It was next rumoured, that the barriers were going to be shut, the bells to be rung, and the alarm-guns to be fired. It was probable, that all this would not be done ; unless there were some grand conspiracy, and the Community were concerned in it. We determined, that I should instantly repair to the Community. Lebrun went with me. We passed by the avenues to the Convention, and the hall of the Jacobins. Every thing was in profound silence. The only noise in the streets was that of the rain which fell, and of some few patrols walking slowly.

The General Council of the Community was assembled, and was very noisy. But, it was so, almost always.

We called for the Mayor, and from him, as the principal director of the police, asked an account of all that was going on. The Mayor informed us, that the Community had just been addressed by a deputation from the *Cordelier-Club* and from the *Section-Des-quatre-nations*, demanding the barriers to be shut, the bells to be rung, and the alarm-guns to be fired ; that the request had been refused, almost without a hearing ; and that the General Council had written a circular letter to the sections, begging them to redouble their vigilance and energy, and reminding them

them of that law which awarded the punishment of death against whosoever should cause the bells to be rung, and the alarm-guns to be fired. Pache read to us, the letter. We let him know, that suspicion would fall upon him, if he should suffer any of those tumultuary enterprises which were threatened, to be carried into execution. Pache assured us, several times, that there were many commotions, but, he well knew, there was no conspiracy; and that effectual measures had been already taken to prevent any act of dangerous violence from being perpetrated during the night. We returned to the office for foreign affairs with the assurance, that the profound tranquillity which prevailed throughout all Paris, was more and more confirmed. But, we now found there neither Bournonville, Brissot, nor Genfonné.

We had persons on the watch in all important stations throughout the city; and from them received constant notice of what was going on. Their information sometimes made us uneasy, and sometimes encouraged us. But, all that we could learn, concurred to satisfy us, that there could be no violent convulsion during the night.

However, on a sudden, there came hastily into Lebrun's chamber, an aid-de-camp in the service of Bournonville, who informed us, that in some sections, the bells were ringing, and that Bournonville had left the war-office, and intreated us all, but especially Claviere, to betake ourselves without delay to some place where we might be in security. Immediately, Lebrun determined to remain in his own house, Claviere to

ask a bed from one of his friends in a different quarter of the town. His own carriage not being in the way ; I took him in mine, and conducted him from the *Rue Cerutti* to the *Rue des St Peres*, in the *Fauxbourg Germain*.

We had passed across a great part of Paris, and particularly those streets and bridges where whenever the multitude are in a commotion, the tumult usually rages with the greatest confusion and fury. Yet, there was no bustle ; all was still. While I was on my way back to my own house, I made the carriage proceed slowly, that I might the better see and hear what was passing. I even stopped some minutes on the bridge *ci-devant Royal*, on the *Carrousel*, at the entrance into the square *ci-devant Vendome*. No sound of bells, no cry of sedition was to be heard. After returning to the house belonging to my office, I sat up with Gouhier, who was then *Secretary-general of Justice*, till half after four in the morning. Men whom we could trust, came in from all parts of the city, and informed that they could hear or see nothing which might be matter of alarm.

This was all I saw, all I learned, all I did, on that night, under the shades of which a multitude of crimes which never came to my knowledge, are said to have accomplished or attempted. Those already known, to me, were but too many.

On the next day, I think it was, that I gave the Convention an account of the events of the night. My own conduct, precisely because there was something honourable in it, was what had the least of my
attention

attention in that report. Nor did I think myself under any necessity of relating, that I had passed a part of the night in company with Brissot and Gensonné; and with them had concerted my measures: An act of discretion this, which, most certainly, did not bespeak me an enemy to the right side of the Convention. Two things of what had that night passed, appeared to me, certain and horrible; the scene exhibited and the motions made at the Jacobin Club; the deputation from the Cordelier Club to the Community. It was upon these two I endeavoured to draw and fix the attention of the National Convention. In the former, I saw men eager for massacres; in the latter, I saw men impatient for revolt. But, in the easy quashing of the efforts of the former by a Jacobin Representative of the People, and in the not more difficult refusal of the proposition of the latter by the firmness of the Mayor, I discerned an evidence of a grand truth;—that no great enterprise of insurrection could ever be accomplished, were it not excited by members of the Convention, and carried into execution by means of the force which is left at the disposal of the Community. I never ceased exhorting the members of both sides: Away with your hatreds and quarrels; and then will all be subject to you, and to the laws, I continually observed to the Committee of General Defence, particularly to Brissot and Gensonné; no great effort of insurrection seems to me to be possible in Paris, as long as you shall have honest men for ministers of the home-department, mayor of Paris, and commander of the armed force,

Out

Out of these three, I can make you sure of one, but the one who in the present state of your government, has the least power to be of service to you. Make yourselves sure of the other two. I cannot believe that Pache is the rascal you affirm him to be, without producing proofs of his guilt. Either prove it at once satisfactorily, or cease to allege it; for if after all, he should happen to be honest, your accusations and abuse may at last excite in his mind the same suspicions concerning you, which you entertain against him; and he may then be induced to join your enemies, and to commit, with a safe conscience, some great crime to the ruin of you, and of the Republic, while all his care is only to save the Republic and himself.

Having given this narrative of these events, I here pause for a moment.

There are two things to be particularly examined; my conduct; and my report to the Convention.

I must confess that I feel an unwillingness to descend to the humiliation of citing witnesses in support of what I assert. But, if witnesses be necessary, although the greater number have been put to death; there are however, still enough surviving, to attest the truth of those facts which I relate, and which particularly regard myself.—In these facts which I leave without comment, to the consideration of the reader; I shall notice but one circumstance. I have been accused as an accomplice with the enemies of the right side of the Convention; and that night which is said to have been destined for the destruction of the
members

members of the right side,—that night did I spend, not in company with their enemies, but with two of their own members, and perhaps with those two who were the most in danger, because they were the objects of the most furious and malignant hatred ! Brave Bournonville, thou who wast the most zealously pursued for destruction by the assassins then in credit, such as Ronfin,—assassins who, when denounced by me to the Committee for General Defence, were for a moment put under arrest,—if thou still survest, if the lines which I now write, shall ever reach thee, wherever thou now art,—it is above all thy testimony which I would invoke ! Say, whether, among thy colleagues, both on that night, and in all seasons of danger, I was he in whom thou hadst the least confidence ? Speaking of Pache, I did not, like you, call him, that *wicked and dark-minded man*. But, our minds being equally disposed to generous confidence, were each day, more and more closely united : And whenever Pache was present, I was still on my guard, watchfully observing his words and his demeanour ; although to me, he expressed none but honest sentiments, and appeared to hate nothing, no, not even his enemies, nor to love aught save his family, and the democracy. Brave Bournonville ! it is not for these transient moments of the uproar of the passions, it is for all future times I now write, and for the sake of that truth, which time will not fail to make at last fully manifest !—Then when you shall have recovered the free use of your voice and your pen, then, O !

confute

confute my assertions if they be false ; but, if they be true, confound my enemies.

The same confidence which was reposed in me by Bournonville, it has appeared that Claviere, who might have less reason, likewise put in me. My carriage was the first concealment he sought ; and he trusted me to convey him to a place of security. There had been occasional differences between me and Claviere : Yet, he knew that I would twenty times rather have been slain myself, than have suffered the sword of the assassin to shed a drop of his blood.

Next day the most furious Jacobins spoke of nothing less than an immediate change of the whole ministry. With this, all the ministers would undoubtedly have been well pleased : but, it is certainly no bad proof, that those who were the most passionate, were far from being well satisfied with the ministers. If it were possible, that notwithstanding the unmoved tranquillity, the unvarying composure of the mind and face of Pache ; Pache could yet hold, at that time, secret intelligence with the furious Jacobins : he must, no doubt, have told them, that I was their enemy, that I regarded them with horror, that I had the fullest confidence in the republican virtues of those against whom they were whetting their daggers.

A man capable of acting in such a manner, could not make an unfaithful report. The facts which I related, and which were proved, were of the most serious importance,—of more serious importance than those which have been suspected, but never proved.

I told all that I and my colleagues knew. It was
duty

duty to say nothing but what I knew. Can it be alleged to have been my duty to know more than I told?

Even under a government invested with great power, and enjoying the highest confidence of the nation, might it not have been even too possible for those villains who were said to be dispersed throughout all the sections, to have concealed many crimes from the government and its agents?

But, where was the power, the national confidence, the agents to have armed the minister of the home-department for the vigorous and effectual discharge of his functions? At my entrance into the ministry, I found it provided with not one instrument, not one agent for vigilant inspection. When I, some time after, attempted to organize a system of observation to extend to Paris and to all the departments; the first testimony of gratitude for this arrangement, in which there was perhaps something both of grandeur and of utility; was a decree passed, upon the denunciation of Collot d'Herbois, which cited me to the bar of the Convention, and put me under arrest. The carrying of that plan of observation into its full effect, cost my successor Paré, four months of solitary imprisonment; and at the end of that space of time, both the predecessor and successor were destined to suffer on the scaffold.

In the situation in which I stood, without agents for inspection, with no means but my own eyes, to watch over the state of Paris; so far is it from surprising that some things should escape my notice, that, on the contrary,

contrary, the wonder would have been, if it had been otherwise. I have, in fact, come since, to the knowledge of things of which I was then ignorant. I have learned that at the *Section de l'Unité*, it had been determined (as appears from the records), that I should be arrested, that same night. It is plain, that, by the nature of the government against which I always protested and exclaimed,—that, if I had been either arrested or assassinated, I must have known it.

Whatever reality there was in the commotions of the night between the 9th and 10th of March, had a strong tendency to alarm men's minds. The dreams which imagination added, were such as to alarm and agitate them still more. On every side men looked eagerly around them, to discover the criminals, but could discern only their crimes. Suspicions were entertained, were abandoned: decrees were enacted, were repealed; it was sometimes no easy matter to know, whether a decree had been passed or not. A decree put Fournier under arrest: Fournier was heard at the bar, enlarged from his arrest, and admitted, if I remember aright, to the honours of the fitting. I received a decree passed and signed in due form, by which I was enjoined to arrest Defieux and Lazoufski. The *Gendarmes* were gone to carry it into execution, in obedience to an order which I had for the first time ventured to give without the intervention of the police; but in the mean while there was received at my office, a new decree, declaring that the former had not been actually passed.

On the 13th of March, a decree was enacted, “or-
“ daining

“ daining me to put immediately under arrest, the
 “ members of the Committee calling itself *a Committee*
 “ *for Insurrection*, and to put my seals as well upon
 “ their private papers, as upon the papers and records
 “ of the Committee.”

What was the Committee? Where did it sit? Who were its members?

Of all these particulars the decree said not a word. Nor did the motions upon which it was founded, afford any better information.

I inquired of every body. Instead of a precise and direct answer, I received an hundred, vague, inconsistent, contradictory replies. I applied by letter for information from the Mayor, and from the department. Their answer was, that they knew of no *Committee of Insurrection*. Some said, *it was every where*; others, that it was *no where*. And whether it were every where or no where, I was still left equally at a loss, what to think, or how to act.

In a resolution of the Cordelier-Club, I had seen that they desired to persuade the forty-eight sections of Paris of the necessity of forming a Committee of Insurrection. But that club's supposed necessity for forming such a committee, could not be to me a proof, that it was actually formed. I should rather have considered that as a proof that there was, as yet, no such club in existence.

However, when a person is neither a tyrant, nor a minister of tyranny, and is nevertheless obliged to execute a great many arrests; what such a person ought always to know without ambiguity, and with-
 out

out uncertainty ; is the indispensable necessity of the arrest. But in a democracy which has, as yet, no stable government, whenever we are threatened with insurrection or revolt ; the surest means for realizing and accelerating the explosion, is by having recourse to arrests not authorised by clear, precise, unequivocal law, or which is the same thing as law, by a formal and particular order from the legislators invested with unlimited powers.

Oppressed with anxious, gloomy anticipations of the future, and fully persuaded that while we sought danger where it was not, we suffered it to rise against us, or rather called it forth where it actually was ; I endeavoured to obtain from every quarter, all possible information concerning the disturbances which then agitated Paris ;—the *foci* from which those convulsions were respectively excited ;—and the men of whom some secretly wrought up, while others loudly invoked the fury of the multitude. The results of all my observations, and of all the information, whether more minute or more general, which I could gather upon these points,—I communicated in a report to the National Convention.

In that report, I declared, and even in the very first words of it, that none of my inquiries had enabled me to discover the existence of any society or assemblage, called a *Committee of Insurrection*. There could be no equivocation in what I said concerning this matter. I expressed the result of my inquiries, with the utmost clearness and freedom. And now, when events having unfolded themselves in a manner

so dreadful, and have thrown so much light on the genuine causes from which they proceeded; it is universally known, that there was at that moment, on the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th of March, no Committee calling itself a Committee of Insurrection in all Paris.

There might, however, be things of which I spake not equivocally, but with a degree of reserve: and it will soon appear, *why* and *how* I did so.

In my report, my chief aim was, to fix the attention of the National Convention upon itself, to make it regard its own internal dissensions as the greatest of all evils to itself, to France, to mankind, whose eyes were universally turned upon it for an example, whether of good or evil. Others might possibly have thought this part of the report extremely delicate and dangerous to handle. But I was not afraid to walk with steady steps over the *burning marle*. It was here I rested, and unfolded all that was in my heart with the fullest confidence, and the most earnest effusion of sentiment. I felt that I was speaking before an Assembly in whose hands was the fate of my country, and of the whole earth. But I saw that Assembly, whose power was so formidable, and their functions so august, to contain, among its members, many excellent men, who were dear to my heart. I sought to insinuate the dictates of truth into their souls in the accents of friendship. I asked one virtue more from men who were naturally endowed with virtues the most exalted. Could your bosoms be but unlocked, said I, to the observation of one another;

I

you

you would perceive in them all, one religious, enthusiastic passion for the welfare of the Republic. That Republic which you all adore,—ah! would you but sacrifice to it, all those hates and mutual resentments which have been kindled among you, solely by the mistaken ardour of your devotion! Neither a religion, nor a republic, can ever be destroyed by traitors or enemies. No; when they fall, it is by sects, the one,—by its parties, that the other is overthrown. Commotions without doors would avail little; nay, could not possibly arise, unless they were fomented or called up by dissensions within the Convention. Here is no treason; but hatred sees treasors on all hands, and marshals still one imaginary train of dark conspiracies against another.

Speaking of the commotions without doors, I made mention of that person of the name of Varlet, who, although scarcely twenty years of age, had, for these four years, been concerned in every seditious tumult that arose. I insisted particularly upon the frequent meetings of a knot of ten or twelve persons at the Corazza coffee-house. To speak of a coffee-house, when an insurrection was the subject of discussion, appeared, at that time, to be either a foolish puerility, or a treacherous evasion under the guise of affected simplicity. But, I added, *those persons meet in the Corazza always after the breaking up of the sittings of the Jacobin Club.* I mentioned some names which might have suggested matter for reflection; such as those of Gusman, Desieux, and Proli, whom I even then represented as the natural son of Kaunitz, and
who

who was at that time the friend of Robespierre : I added, *Some members, even of the Convention, repair thither ; and if it be the command of the Convention, I shall here declare their names :* But this the Convention seemed not to desire : The names I had to give, were principally those of Chabot and Collot d'Herbois. Collot has since let me know, that he understood what I pointed at, and did not, like many others, smile at my harangue as contemptibly trifling. But, in general, the tedious length of my details concerning the Corazza coffee-house, excited against my report a ridicule and a resentment which were not soon forgotten : And on the 31st of May, when, upon the ringing of the alarum-bells, and the firing of the minute-guns, I repaired to the Convention, to join the deputies who were there at their posts : Lanjuinais, one of those whose lives were the most in danger, came up to me, and said, not in anger, but in scorn, *Well, Garat, is this the Corazza coffee-house ?* What could I then reply ? We were no longer at a loss to know, whether the monsters were secretly assembling ; they were entering the sanctuary of the laws ; the department was at the bar ; and L'Huilier, who from that moment till he was himself no more, never ceased from demanding my execution,—piously protested, that the insurrection was merely *a moral ferment*.

The words, and accent with which Lanjuinais spoke, were such as to indicate a soul, exalted above all mean emotions, by the magnitude of the dangers surrounding him. At that federunt, and in the subsequent ones, every word which escaped from his lips, served

to prove indubitably, that virtue and misfortune are the true sources of whatever is beautiful and sublime in moral conduct. Lanjuinais, if his memory have, like mine, retained the remembrance of what I here record, will confirm its truth. And, after a year of crimes and calamities unparalleled in the history of mankind, one of the sweetest consolations which my heart can now experience, is that of speaking to the heart of Lanjuinais. After twelve months of destruction and slaughter, I can now give an answer to his question. Yes, Lanjuinais, *it was the Corazza coffee-house!* The secret perhaps remained unknown to you in the dark caverns in which you sought refuge.— But here, amid the insolent triumph of faction, of the executioner, of the scaffold, the guilty secret has been revealed to all the world; *and it was the Corazza coffee-house.* In the breasts of those who mingled in the contests of the two sides of the Convention, glowed all the passions which naturally tend to kindle up revolt. But, at the Corazza coffee-house, were held the almost daily conferences of those whose necromancy was collecting the yet distant storm, and who were preparing to conjure up revolt in the same forms of organization in which it had appeared on the 10th of August. Gusman, Desfieux, Proli, Chabot, Collot, were the most assiduous attendants at those conferences; and Collot, Chabot, Proli, Desfieux, Gusman, were the principal authors of the revolt on the 31st of May, and the 2d of June. The 10th of August was imitated even to the most ridiculous trifles. As Pethion had been confined by the insurgents on the 10th

10th of August; so was Chabot in like manner detained at the Episcopal palace by the revolvers on the 31st of May. Let others triumph, when unfortunate experience, too late, bears witness to truth, which, when uttered from their lips, was scorned and outraged: I mourn, I am confounded, I feel all the pride of wisdom die within me, when I contemplate instances so striking of the vanity of all the prudence and the foresight of man!

While I was looking every where around me for a *Committee of Insurrection*, and one day made the inquiry at the Committee of General Defence, which consisted mostly of members belonging to the *Right-Side*; a member of that Committee told me, I am astonished that you should with so much pains, and so little success, seek for the *Committee of Insurrection*: It exists in the Sections of Paris, in the Jacobin Club.

I confess, I was astonished. Astonished I should not have been, that the seeds, the fermenting leaven, the instruments of insurrection, should be said to exist in the Jacobins and the Sections. Of this I knew what to think, and they knew what I said. But, that a member of the Committee of General Defence should assure me, in the presence of a number of his colleagues, that, by the *Committee of Insurrection*, whose papers and records I was commanded to seal up, whose members I was to put under arrest,—that, by this Committee I was to understand the popular society of the Jacobins, and the Sections of the Community of Paris,—appeared so very extraordinary, that I could not

get the better of the surprise with which it struck me, otherwise than by supposing it to be one of those assertions which will sometimes fall from men inconsiderately, and in the heat of discourse.

That same day, or the day after, I received a packet, which, upon opening it, I found to contain a card of a few lines, with several leaves of a journal. I opened the card, and read these words :

“ I send Citizen Garat a journal, from which he will learn where it is that a plot is framed for the assassination of the members of the Convention. Either this is, or nothing can be, satisfactory evidence. I call upon Citizen Garat to reflect, that posterity must, one day, sit in judgment on his conduct in the present crisis. A multitude of proofs are now in his hands.”

I read over the pages of the journal, and found them to contain extracts of some very violent, extemporary harangues made by Lejeune, Garnier, Bentalolle, and Legendre, at the Jacobin Club.

I then began to think, that there was a serious desire to make me take the Jacobin Club, with a great many of the members of the National Convention, for the *Committee of Insurrection*, whose members I had been ordered to put under arrest.

Some few days after, there appeared a pamphlet, written by a member of the Convention, which left me no room for doubt upon this score ; for it formally pointed out the Jacobin Club, the street, the very house in which they held their meetings.

The member of the Committee of General Defence,

fence, to whom I have above alluded, was Guadet: the card was from Brissot: Louvet was the author of the pamphlet.

Of these three representatives of the people, the two first have unworthily fallen on the scaffold. The last, through a train of miraculous adventures, fortunately escaped the rage of the assassins.

You who have survived so many innocent victims; on whom our eyes are universally turned with the same compassionate and respectful interest, with which all future ages must regard their death, as well as your dangers, and the misfortunes of the rising Republic: With you alone can I now enter upon an examination of an opinion which was common to you all three! I perceived and felt all the propriety of that delicate reserve, which withheld you from throwing out even a single reproach against a man, whom some facts, which had never been clearly explained to you, might have led you to regard with resentment. I conjure you, therefore, with the confident assurance, that you will not reject my request, not to avail yourself of the merit of your sufferings, for enforcing your opinions by any other authority than that of reason: Consider, that in the persons even of some men, whose life and death have displayed and inspired virtues before unknown to the human heart, great sorrows have served to shed a lustre upon great errors: Consider, that you, above all others, are obliged, for the rest of your days, to believe nothing that is not true, to do nothing unworthy of the dignity of your past misfortunes! I should not have addressed to you

even the most reasonable of complaints, when you were struggling amid your misfortunes: now when you are in power, I shall venture to controvert some of your opinions. All the world, men and all their fortunes, would have long since perished the victims of error, resentment, vengeance, of the Genius of Destruction; had there not, from time to time, arisen on earth, minds sufficiently generous and enlightened to calm the passions even of virtue.

I now demand, therefore, from Louvet, and from all who shall deign to read these lines, whether, when the National Convention spoke to me of a *Committee of Insurrection*, it was reasonable that I should understand them to mean the Jacobin Society? Altho' the things might be in some sort synonymous; yet, could the words be so? Had the Jacobin Society changed their ordinary appellation, which was in itself sufficiently terrible, for that of a Committee of Insurrection? Would its friends or its enemies distinguish it by any new appellation, while the old appeared to the former sufficiently honourable, to the latter abundantly disgraceful?

If any such thing did about that time take place in Paris, I must own own it was altogether without my knowledge.

Had the change even actually been made in some places, and in regard to some persons; yet, was this enough to warrant the use of it in a decree, in an order for the sealing up of registers, and the arresting of a great number of men. Would it not have been first requisite, that the new form of words should be generally known and adopted? Nay, if such was the intention

tention of the decree, why did it not explicitly use these obvious words, *the Committee of Insurrection*, otherwise called *the Jacobin Society*? The decree was received at my office, on the 14th of March, I believe, and about the hour of ten in the evening. Suppose that, in the night, I had taken under arrest all the members of the Jacobin Society, and, among others, Robespierre, Danton, Legendre, Bantabolle, Freron, Garnier, Tallien, Camille, Desmoulins, &c. &c.—can it be imagined, that a dreadful insurrection would have failed to break forth throughout all Paris, before sun-rise? Can it be believed, that such an insurrection would not have appeared somewhat more lawful than that which happened on the 31st of May? Streams of blood would have been shed; and then, not to the movers, not to the authors of the decree, but to the minister alone, who had carried it into execution, would all the consequent crimes and calamities have been imputed; to the minister, who, when ordered to arrest the members of the *Committee of Insurrection*, had taken it upon him to arrest those of the Jacobin Society.

But why do I talk of arresting? What force had I at my command, fit to execute such orders of arrest? Who knows not, that at that period the decrees of arrest, especially such as required some display of an armed force, *were* executed, could only be executed by the Community of Paris? Would Pache and Chaumette have arrested the Jacobins and the Mountain?

I believed, too, that the Jacobin Society had among
 them,

them, not indeed the Committee, but the Genius, or rather the Dæmon of Insurrection. But, if it were necessary to seize their papers, to arrest their members, to shut their doors ; such a motion, at such a time, required such an effort of courage and magnanimity, as might well have become the representatives of France. Why then was not the motion made by Guadet, by Louvet, by Brissot, who cannot be said to have wanted the courage becoming a Revolutionary Legislator ? Of late, when the motion to shut up the hall of the Jacobins was necessary, and was actually made, who was afraid to utter their name ? Was it without naming them, that the rock of the Republic was sealed upon the mouth of that tremendous cavern, in which those ragged cyclops stored up the winds, and forged the thunder, before which the astonished, trembling Republic was ready to disappear ? But since, after so much silence and oppression, we have survived to times in which, as Tacitus expresses it, we are at liberty to think what we please, and to speak what we think ; I shall farther add, that, on the 13th of March 1793, the members of the Convention, whoever they might be, who should have made a motion for the sealing up of the papers of the Jacobin Society, and arresting its members, would have only accelerated, by a fatal convulsion, the moment of that insurrection, which has been called the Revolt of the 31st of May. Democracy, at its origin among a great people, who have lived for ages the subjects of Kings, is incident to vices which seem virtues, till they rise to such a pitch as to spread universal terror.

for. And before it reaches that height of fury and horror, which, in so terrible a manner, corrects itself; democracy can be hindered from demagogic folly, alike atrocious and destructive, solely by the most careful policy, and the most rigorous restraints of a powerful government. How often have I said this to Brissot! He several times seemed to hear me with recollected attention, and with emotion; but on the morrow, I still saw by his journal, that he had not understood me.

It is a thing unavoidable, when the passions guide the course of events; that events should, in their turn, irritate and inflame the passions. These are awful dramas of which this earth is the theatre, and in which the events to which the passions give birth, and the passions which are called forth into action by those events, accelerate and urge their march towards catastrophes in which the principal actors perish, and the action pauses over a scene deluged with blood, until other persons, actuated by other passions, are brought forward in new dramas, and conducted by these to other catastrophes.

After the 10th of March, a measure which circumstances rendered necessary, and which was adopted by the Convention, produced within its bosom, in the bosom of France, new causes of dissension. It was resolved to raise new forces, forces proportioned to the grandeur of the Republic, to its resources, to its glorious cause. It was resolved to levy these forces for our defence, in the utmost haste, and to send representatives of the people into all the departments,

not

not to spread the cry of general alarm, but the cry of patriotism, of war, of glory.

Of those sent upon this illustrious mission, the greater number were selected from the side of the Mountain : And the Mountain was weakened by this very choice, which proved its power.

The Mountain, thus diminished in its numbers, could no longer muster a majority.

On the other hand, very many of those missionaries from the Mountain, who were diffused throughout the Republic, found the minds of men generally irritated against them, and their affections alienated from them. This they ascribed to the correspondence of the members belonging to the Right Side, with their departments. What was perhaps true of some, was affirmed of all.

In all their letters, those missionaries not only complained, that they had been ill received, but even accused the Right Side of having employed means to disappoint a mission, the success of which was necessary for the defence and safety of the Republic.

Their resentment, pregnant with all the rage which personal interests can excite, when thwarted or injured ; acquired, by those means, sufficient pretexts likewise to enable them to give vent to their private passions, under the guise of ardent patriotism.

The Mountain became furious, yet was weak. Some bold enterprise was therefore dreaded from them.

From this time, the Jacobins began to throw out their menaces more openly, more desperately : The Community grew more bold in the assumption of power ;
the

the Sections more tumultuous :—although there were in the Community, and among the Jacobins, both good and bad men ; there was, however, but one spirit. In the Sections there were two. The good strove to get the ascendancy ; but the bad still snatched it from their hands. They were betrayed : and those who were the most hot-headed, easily propagated the belief, that, in the Convention, the members of the greatest ability were accomplices with the traitors. And those men of ability, who were thus accused, although they might have been well aware that it was of the utmost consequence to their own safety, and to the public safety, that they should act with prudence and discretion, suffered themselves, nevertheless, to be provoked to unguarded fury.

Whispered secrets, and confidential communications, were circulated from all quarters, concerning some grand conspiracy, or some important judicial act, which was soon to be displayed.

At last, a report arose, of the existence of a plot more criminal than all the rest, a plot originating in that very place in which were the magistrates and troops employed for the detection and prevention of all such crimes.

Barrere then proposed a Commission of *Twelve* ; and, by the influence of the Right Side, all the members of the New Commission were chosen from among them.

It must be confessed, that this Commission was perfectly revolutionary, in the good sense of the word. The purpose of its institution was, to repress the extravagancies

travagancies of democracy in the rising commonwealth, to restrain the Revolution, in order to confirm it ; to stay its career, in order to complete it. But, in disorders of the body politic, as of the body natural, remedies fitted to act with extraordinary energy, ought to be cautiously administered. One stroke seasonably struck, may serve entirely to repress all popular fury : A number rashly and unwisely inflicted, will often have no other effect than to exasperate that fury. In the former case, authority and liberty are proved to be one and the same thing ; in the latter, the energy of government is exclaimed against, as being tyranny.

The Commission of *Twelve* acted with many signal displays of virtue. In the judgment even of their friends, they did not equally distinguish themselves by wisdom.

Amid its first operations, that Commission threw into the *Abbaye* prison, the agent of the Community ; called Chaumette before it ; and threatened Pache.

At the same time, while these arrests made a noise, accounts were circulated of the formation of a different Court from that which had dismissed Marat in triumph ; and it was also reported, that the National Convention, since it had not been purged by a scrutiny, would speedily be purged by the sword of law.

The Twelve had, perhaps, inconsiderately uttered some of these threats. They, against whom the threats were directed, exaggerated them. They pretended to give credit to the design of the attack,
that

that the belief might be employed as an engine of defence.

Henceforth the Commission were no longer named the *Twelve*, but the *Decemvirs*; and the magic of this word, which had, three thousand years ago, raised an insurrection of the people of Rome, now accomplished the same effect in Paris.

The Commission of Twelve summoned me to attend them. I, in their presence, wrote and signed all that had come to my knowledge, concerning the transactions at the mansion-house of the Mayor. Whatever denunciations, suspicions, or alarms, were discovered to me, these I eagerly communicated to them, without waiting for their orders.

On the 26th of May, an hour and a half before midnight, information was given me, at the office of the minister for the interior department, that a grand commotion was beginning to break out at the gate of St Bernard; that women were at the head of it, but were accompanied by armed men. I, that instant, sent two *gens d'armes* to bring me a distinct account of the fact; and went myself to communicate the matter to the Commission of Twelve. At the hall of that Commission, I found no person but Rabaut Pommier, who went to find his brother. Half an hour after this, I was joined by Rabaut de St Etienne, at the place of meeting belonging to the Committee of Public Safety. From the report of my *gens d'armes*, I was by this time sure, that there was nothing formidable in the commotion at the gate of St Bernard: But I was well aware, that more se-

rious commotions must soon ensue. There was a personal friendship between me and Rabaut de St Etienne. I loved his personal character, I venerated his philosophy ; I knew that a fertile and glowing imagination, disposed him often to fancy relations between events which had no real existence. But I knew also, that he loved truth, and had disciplined his understanding to distinguish and to seize it.

With Rabaud de St Etienne, I had here a very long and very confidential conversation. I did not scruple to inform him, that I thought there was great imprudence and great danger, in leaving to the Community the disposal of all the troops in Paris,—and yet at the same time arresting, almost in the midst of it, one of the municipal officers. Can you forget, said I to him, that we live at a time when men have audacity sufficient to attempt whatever they suppose themselves to have ability to perform, and when honourable names are easily found to palliate whatever they may have successfully dared to perpetrate ? At the hall belonging to the Commission, there was shewn to me a horrible passage in one of the papers of Hebert, which I had not read. But that passage, horrible as it is, is not worse than an hundred others in the journals of Marat.—Marat, whom a court of justice has honourably acquitted, and sent, in all the pride of impunity, to take his place among the members of the Legislature ! Surely, if the laws were duly in force, Marat would now be, at least where you have sent Hebert. But, believe me, it is not safe to send Hebert to the *Abbaye*, when Marat is in the Convention.

Convention. The mob, while they crown the one with laurels, will not suffer the other to remain in chains. A few days since, persons of moderation and good sense, friends to liberty, but not to licentiousness, had taken the lead in the Sections. But, since these arrests were executed, the violent and furious have resumed their wonted ascendancy, and have begun to breathe all their former rage. No body feels more strongly than I, the necessity there is for the laws to retain all their energy. But, that law may remain fully in force; it must, in the first instance, possess force. Now the force you have resigned into the hands of the Community. Withdraw it then, if it be not your desire that the Community, not the law, should alone have force. We have accustomed men's minds to the idea of an unbounded liberty of the press. We laughed in the Constituent Assembly, when the people were exhorted by *their friend* (*Marat in his Journal*) to hang eight hundred of us on the trees of the Thuilleries. And now, all of a sudden, while we have not yet any good laws upon this head, concerning which we have given out an hundred foolish things, you arrest a man for printing a paper which is no worse than an hundred others, at the atrocious absurdities of which, we rather smiled, than felt any thing like horror. Before performing such strong acts of government, we ought first to have a government. This short space, while you are a majority, would, in my mind, be better employed in silently constructing, so as not to alarm the enemy's camp, a vigorous executive power with which you may humble into submission,

in the presence of the law, or may level under its feet, all the disturbances which arise, and all the rascals by whom they are excited.

Rabaut de St Etienne protested to me, that he had to the utmost of his power, opposed the arrest of Hebert; that he, as well as I, had judged the act to be dangerous. Fonfrede and Vigier too have since informed me, that Hebert was arrested likewise contrary to their opinion. I left Rabaut de St Etienne seriously impressed with the conviction, that when our power is weak, we ought to exercise it with great caution, if we wish to give it dignity and effect.

Next morning I addressed myself in the same style to Fonfrede, who, although much younger, and of a much more ardent impetuosity of mind, appeared to me to be equally struck with the truth of what I said.

On that very day, the 27th of May, a terrible storm was to burst forth,—to afflict the Republic with the most dreadful misfortunes,—to throw upon me a weight of atrocious calumnies.

When I left the Executive Council, between the hours of four and five in the afternoon, I perceived nothing about the hall of the Convention, that seemed to threaten any immediate commotion, or that could excite any fears. About half after six, while I was at dinner, and no person with me but my nephew; one of those citizens who were then employed to give me, from time to time, an account of the state of Paris, one whose communications had been always framed to serve the *Right Side*, came suddenly in, and in great alarm informed me, that the Convention was in the

utmost

utmost danger, and at that moment besieged by an immense mob, and by an armed force ; that there was a loud cry, *To arms* ; and a talk of massacring those, who, in the trial of Lewis, had proposed the appeal to the people ; and that every thing concurred to threaten immediate contest and carnage. I had not been sent for by the Convention : but, when the Convention were in danger, I thought that my proper post was in the midst of them ; and thither I instantly repaired.

On my way through the Thuilleries, I indeed observed several knots of the people collected here and there ; yet these knots were neither very many, nor was any of them very large, nor did they appear to be very tumultuous.

On the great stair-case, and at the door of the Hall of Liberty, I saw a great and very tumultuous crowd, who pressed eagerly round the door, but wore no arms, unless perhaps those might be concealed.

When I entered the courts of the National Palace, I saw lighted matches held over the cannons, and a considerable armed force parading backward and forward on the terrace before the Palace, and in front of the *Carrouzel*. After this, I could no longer doubt but the Convention was actually besieged ; and so much regularity in the conducting of a commotion so criminal, convinced me that there must be some considerable persons at the head of it.

I met with Liddon, who told me, that it was extremely difficult to make one's way into the Convention, and that his life had been threatened. Liddon

was going to the Commission of Twelve. I went with him. We were, at the same time, joined by Pache who had been sent for, by Destournelles, and by some other members of the Community. In the hall of the Commission, there had already arisen between some of the municipal officers, and one or two members of the Commission, some high words, such as serve more to exasperate passion, than to clear up misunderstandings. There was one thing I chiefly wanted to know, and to know unequivocally, by whose orders the armed force without had been called thither, and under whose directions they were. Liddon protested that he knew nothing of the matter. Pache let me know, that he had signed the requisition, but signed it by compulsion. Rabaut de St Etienne, who seemed to be exhausted with fatigue, made no answer to my question, because he had to reply to other inquiries, which were at the same time put to him.

In the mean time we were informed, that the ferment was every moment augmented within and without the Convention. Pache went to the bar, and I myself determined to go also to the Convention, that I might be the better able to judge of its internal condition.

Crossing the court, we had to pass along the file of the armed force. I heard several of those who were under arms say, laughing, *Ah! ah! see the scoundrel scarfs!* A little after this, I heard these very words; *How can Garrat go with these rascals!* Beyond the armed force, were some men not in arms, and a great many women. There the municipal officers received

no more abuse ; but many blessings. It was said,
These who pass are our good fathers.

Before entering the Convention, we stopped some moments with some members of the Committee of the Inspectors of the hall. I still continued to ask for an explanation of the nature and intentions of the armed force, which of all I had seen, was the only thing that could endanger the safety of the convention. Before entering the hall, I received such information concerning its destination, as left me no longer in doubt.

Hardly had I entered the Convention, which seemed a field of battle, with two hostile armies drawn out in opposition to one another, when there was a call for me to be heard, although I myself made no such request.

What they wanted of me, what I should say, I knew not.

Without reflection, with emotions of mind which were directed solely by that secret impulse which guides our thoughts and words to those objects and those sentiments of which our minds are full ; I spoke first to the Assembly, of the most immediate causes of the prevailing commotions ; I represented to them, as the first and most powerful of these causes, the current report of a plot formed at the mansion house of the mayoralty, for the purpose of assassinating the Two and Twenty, and of giving out that they had gone into emigration. I assured the Convention, that some *horrible propositions* had in fact been made at the mayoralty,—the first time in absence of the mayor himself,—and had been afterwards repeated in his

presence ; but had been by him rejected with indignation, and reprobated with all that abhorrence which they deserved. I conjured the Convention to consider, that a few execrable propositions, rejected with abhorrence, are no more to be considered as a dreadful conspiracy, than any mischievous motion is to be regarded as a detestable law. I particularly insisted, that the detestation of such a proposition should not be suffered to extend itself to the very man by whom the proposition had been quashed.

I then endeavoured to speak, at the same time, of the power of the Community, and the arrestment of Hebert. By this, I was sure of awakening many of the members on the Right Side, to a remembrance of those truths which I had been for some time incessantly hollowing in their ears.

It did not become a minister openly and expressly to declare, that there was a necessity for reforming the organization of the Community. He would then have been regarded as a man disposed to infringe the rights of the people and of mankind ; and even without bearing the name of *minister*, would have appeared an agent of tyranny.

It was not for a minister to say bluntly to the Convention, *Your own decrees have reared the colossus which now threatens to crush you in pieces.* What I said, was as follows ; if cautious and delicate, it was however sufficiently express and unequivocal.

“ Citizens, I conjure the National Convention to
 “ listen indulgently to what I have the honour to
 “ address to them. No person’s intentions can be

“ more

“ more pure than mine. One cause of all the present
 “ tumults, is an opinion, WHICH HAS GAINED CRE-
 “ DIT, that the Community of Paris is ambitious to
 “ rival the authority and power of the National Con-
 “ vention. And of this it is considered to be a
 “ strong proof,—that the Community, of its own
 “ authority, raises whatever troops and contribu-
 “ tions it judges to be requisite. To exact contribu-
 “ tions, to levy troops, are in truth ACTS OF SOVE-
 “ REIGNTY. But, I FEAR, Citizen President, that
 “ even the National Convention MAY HAVE FORGOT-
 “ TEN the series of its own decrees, and THE EF-
 “ FECTS WHICH HAVE RESULTED from those de-
 “ crees! The National Convention has set the
 “ example to all the administrative bodies, by autho-
 “ rising the famous act of the department of L’ He-
 “ rault. That act was clearly an exertion of sove-
 “ reign power! By it the department of L’ Herault
 “ raised six thousand, nay, six millions of men.
 “ The Community in exercising acts of sovereignty,
 “ such as belong to the Convention alone, has usurp-
 “ ed no powers, but has exerted those powers with
 “ which it was virtually armed by the Convention
 “ itself.”

Immediately after uttering these words, I proceeded
 to speak of the arrestment of Hebert.

I declared that I had no personal knowledge of
 that substitute of the agent for the Community, but
 that Pache and D’Estournelle had asserted themselves
 to have found his conduct irreproachable in the dis-
 charge of the functions of that office. I declared that

I knew nothing of his papers of *Pere Duchesne*; that I did not read them; that I thought their language altogether unworthy of a man and a magistrate; that I had naturally the utmost aversion for all writings which spoke of liberty in a style inconsistent with pure morality. Here, while I was endeavouring to compare the licentiousness of *Pere Duchesne*, with the many other unjustifiable things which resembled it; with incitement to assassination, which had been overlooked by our legislators amid their zeal for the unlimited liberty of the press,—nay, had been even protected by those legislators;—I was suddenly interrupted by a great commotion in the house, and an outcry of *He is pronouncing the panegyric of PERE DUCHESNE* I paused; and when the house became calm, again went on in these words, while Marat stood directly opposite to me, below the President and the Secretaries.

“ My words have been misunderstood.
 “ Can it be for a moment supposed, that I would undertake the apology or defence of those INFAMOUS
 “ writings, in which murder has been proposed, as
 “ a means to secure and confirm our liberty? in
 “ which to make the people free, they are stimulated to phrenzy. I also was the
 “ editor of a newspaper: I wrote in it at a time when
 “ every revolutionary passion was inflamed to the
 “ utmost extravagance. But, I never wrote a line
 “ in it which I should not even on the brink of the
 “ grave rejoice to have written. All its pages breathe
 “ at least the correct morality of a friend to man-
 “ kind.

“ kind. That morality flowed from my pen, because
 “ its living spring was in my heart.”

After these general reflections upon the causes of the condition in which the Convention then were, I came to speak of that condition itself. I related what I had seen on the outside of the Hall. I said expressly, that the door on the left-hand of the President, might indeed be closed up, and rendered impassable by a crowd of citizens, whom I had seen there assembled, but that the avenues to that on his right-hand, by which I had entered, were still sufficiently clear and passable. I repeated a proposition which I had made to the Commission of Twelve, I proposed that the whole Convention, the members of the Right Side intermixed with those of the Left, should present themselves to the people; and I ventured to *affirm*, that, in this case, the people would respectfully open to make way before them, and would form, on either hand, a rampart for their protection. Should this advice be adopted, I expressed myself willing to advance the foremost, that is, I pledged my life upon my counsel.

It was this same proposition, which being repeated and adopted on the 2d of June, when the National Representatives were actually besieged, had all the success which I expected, was honoured and respected amid bayonets and cannons, and would have been still more completely successful, had not the members returned back into the house.

At every word of this extemporary speech, uttered amid an Assembly in which raged all the furies of
 hatred

hatred and suspicion; I still gave a loose to all the tenderest feelings of my heart: " I do not intreat
 " you, said I to the two Sides, to lay aside all your
 " mutual hatred in a moment of reconciliation. Such
 " a proposal would be puerile and almost ridiculous.
 " But I conjure you all, in the name of the Repu-
 " blic, which you all equally love, to consider that its
 " fate is in your hands; and that a single explosion
 " of your passions may destroy it. One drop of blood
 " spilt in this hall, would cause torrents to be shed
 " throughout the Republic."

Alas! how easy it was to foresee this! Ah! how has the accomplishment outdone every prediction!

While I spoke, I heard those on the Left Side: *Those Twelve are twelve rascals. Their commission is of the same stamp with Cardinal Richlieu's commissions.* This was far from being my opinion; but, least it should be supposed to be mine, I determined that moment to oppose it.

" I shall conclude, added I, with some observations
 " respecting the *Commission of Twelve*. Conferring
 " with them all, together, and with each of them by
 " himself, with that mutual confidence, and open-
 " ness of heart which unfold the secrets of the soul;
 " I have been led to think, that I could discover in
 " them, an extraordinary mixture—of suspicion direct-
 " ed against men whom they do not love; of a dread
 " of danger to the public weal, perturbing their imagi-
 " nations; of desire to make a display of extraordinary
 " courage; of anxiety to appear to render a mighty
 " service to the Republic: And this I believe,

" it

“ it is which has led them into errors. that to me
 “ seem unaccountable. They are men of worth ; but
 “ even virtue has its errors ; and the errors of virtue
 “ are not always the least dangerous. You know,
 “ Citizen President, you who are yourself a member
 “ of the Commission of Twelve, you know that I
 “ have, before now, addressed to you this very lan-
 “ guage. What I now say cannot appear new to
 “ you. The esteem I express for you, is not even an
 “ esteem feigned with a good intention, to soothe
 “ those angry passions which we are all anxious to
 “ suppress. No : it is the simple and genuine lan-
 “ guage of my heart.”

Since calumny has in regard to me cast off all
 shame ; its malice gives me a right, not only to say
 whatever might serve to justify me, but even to de-
 clare what may tend to do me honour. I therefore
 add, that, at the very instant when I was entering the
 Convention, I was told, that the *Left* was about to
 fire upon the *Right* Side, and to fall upon them sword
 in hand. I did not believe it. But it was possible,
 not to believe, and yet fear it. With this fear upon
 my mind, I went to take my place, not on the *Left*,
 but on the *Right* Side. The members of the *Right*
 Side, were then far from suspecting, that a man who
 did not share their passions, was however willing to
 share their fate. Yet I have reason to think that there
 were some among them who more than suspected, who
 actually knew it. But——

This speech, the sole object and end of which,
 were to soothe hatred and outrage, had, to an extra-
 ordinary

ordinary degree, the contrary effect of exciting the most violent rage against myself : This speech, in which such scrupulous care was taken to express every truth, without disguising or exaggerating any, to declare those truths which passion hides, to reduce within their just limits, those which passion inflames : — This very speech it was that raised up a thousand false and ridiculous calumnies against me.

Next day, I was denounced in a number of newspapers, to the Republic, as an accomplice with all who had conspired, who were conspiring, or who should hereafter conspire, against it. Because I had accidentally met with the mayor, it was said that I had come with him : because on the night immediately preceding, I think it was, a patrol had stopped my carriage as I was on my way to the Community ; it was affirmed that I went thither to concert the *siege* of the Convention, and the speech in which I had endeavoured to prove that it was actually in a state of siege : because I had, with considerable facility of expression, stated thoughts which were constantly present to my mind, and had, not without a degree of animation, poured forth sentiments which filled my whole soul ; it was concluded, it was asserted, that I had made a *studied* speech. Men, the danger and difficulties of whose situation agitated my mind night and day, employed, in order to discredit and disgrace me, all those strained associations of facts and ideas, which, to a cool and calm head, appear incomprehensible, but are natural to minds subject to the impotent fury of the passions ; all that malignant logic

which

which was, since, exercised in framing the acts of accusation which brought themselves to the scaffold!

What would they have had me to say? Was it not at their own earnest and sudden request that I spoke? Did they wish me to affirm that those guilty proposals which were rejected at the *mayoralty*, had been there approved and resolved upon? My judgment could not confound together two things so distinct from one another: for my mind was not inflamed with those passions, the phrenzy of which might have naturally occasioned such a confusion. Would they have had me to declare, that the author of an execrable daily paper ought to be imprisoned, without the use of any previous formalities? I had too diligently watched the progress of the revolution through all its different stages, not to know that writings of a spirit at least as sanguinary, had been not only suffered, but encouraged: and while I spake, I had under my eye, even among the members of the legislature, a man who exhibited with impunity, daily examples of such publications, in atrocity so much exceeding all other similar ones, that they were fitted to serve as a model for all. It was not the well-deserved detention of the person under arrest that moved me; it was the danger of those who had put him into that state; a danger much better known to me than to themselves. I thought the danger singularly great, when an arrest for a fact of such a nature, was executed for the first time, upon the person of a member of a community left in possession of an authority, inconsistent with every principle of justice and policy, and of a force so favourable to the commission of great crimes.—I
had

had no right either to condemn or propose any thing : I did therefore propose or condemn nothing. But, every appearance concurred to convince me, that exceedingly honest men, that legislators, blameless as to their intentions, had been led into imprudent and fatal measures : and I should have thought myself the basest of men,—as a minister above measure culpable, if I had not, on that subject, pointed out my views, and expressed my apprehensions. Did they wish me to say, that the National Convention was besieged, and that the members of the Right Side could not retire without being exposed to fall by the sword of the assassin ? All that my eyes had seen, all that my ears had heard, all that my heart had conceived, assured me of the contrary. My conviction was of such a nature that I could have pledged my life upon it, without supposing my life to be in the smallest degree endangered.

Here is a fact which has never, I think, been publicly explained, but which deserves to be so.

Incomparably the most numerous part of the assemblage around the Convention, consisted of *the armed force*. I wished to know what it was, and why it was there. With some pains, I came at last, not to *conjectures*, but actually to know for certain, that this armed force had been demanded by the Commission of Twelve, who had indicated the very Sections from which they wished the detachments sent, to be drawn. The very names of those Sections, were a sufficient pledge, that it was there, not to besiege, but to protect the Convention and the Right Side.

Side. This I knew, yet did not mention. No body sought to guess my reason. Although so many fictitious facts were alledged against me; this true one was not even taken notice of. Now, however, I have but too much occasion to bring it forward. I then concealed it, because I was sure, that if I had only named the Sections by which that armed force had been furnished; their names would have excited the utmost alarm and fury among many members belonging to the Mountain. This could not be the reserve of an enemy to the Right Side of the Convention.

Among so many people who thought and acted upon suspicion, it was impossible that I myself should not also have had some suspicions.—I confess that there did suspicions at times occur to my mind; and that I could not always easily reject them. I sometimes conjectured, that the members of the Commission of Twelve, seeing the Right Side incessantly threatened by the speeches of the popular societies, at the Jacobin Club and at the meetings of the Community, were not unwilling to have the danger thought greater than it actually was, and more serious than they themselves conceived it to be; that they contributed to give consistency and force to the report that the Convention was in a state of siege; that they suffered the armed force, which was there for its defence, to be taken for an armed force about to assault it; that they thought this policy to be lawful, by which they called in, and took under their protection, a force that was wanted to guard their lives, and gave to justice and the laws the requisite energy to enable them to crush
the

the demagogues, and to repress the tumults of anarchy.

If any person had such an intention as this, I must avow that it never was communicated to me.

I declare, too, that in all probability, I should have refused to make myself the instrument of it.

More than once in the course of the revolution, I have seen men who were not void of virtuous principles,—call to the aid of even the purest principles, and the most legal measures, means in which truth and falsehood were artfully combined together; and in order the more effectually to disconcert and punish their enemies,—imputed to them crimes which they had not committed. I perceived this; and all I could do, was, to shut my mouth, although not my eyes.

There are perhaps occasions greatly terrible, upon which the *good cause*, the cause of mankind, must, without other alternatives, be either saved by such stratagems, or left at the mercy of dangers otherwise inevitable. There may possibly be some share of truth in what was, one day, said to me by one of the most celebrated leaders in our revolution: *You are a miserably bad man for a revolution: you will not make use of a piece of villany, even when the public good requires it.* He laughed, thinking he had uttered a good thing: to me it suggested a train of melancholy reflections; for I felt that it went deep. That temper of mind for which he blamed me, has however been in me always incorrigible. I have ever thought that the means and instruments ought to be equally pure with the end proposed:—And that *evil* doing perhaps some apparent

apparent momentary good, still unhappily compensates that by ages of corruption and mischief. From this source in our laws and public transactions, nay, even already in our habitual manners, have flowed all those disorders, errors, and misfortunes, from the influence of which our liberty will not easily set itself free; which must long continue to deform to the eyes of the nations, that sacred image of liberty which ought to be universally adored, as soon as the veil is withdrawn which hides her from the eyes of mortals. Had then the secret of such measures been confided to me, I should have said, *Seek some other minister of your purposes: your end I approve: to your means I cannot lend my sanction.* Alas! I tremble to speak, I tremble to think it! but it may be that a minister less scrupulously respectful of the truth, might by falsehood have prevented that deluge of crimes, and of bloodshed, which for the space of an whole year spread devastation over the face of the Republic. Truth and virtue, alone, can give lasting happiness to mankind; but then the happiness which they bestow, is eternal as themselves. The execution of the laws which they impose, may for a moment let loose the angry and the guilty passions, just as the execution of the laws of nature, by which the harmony of the universe is maintained, nevertheless produces storms and tempests, by which ships are wrecked on the ocean, and the peasant is buried in sudden death, amid the ruins of his cottage.—It may be that I did wrong not to disguise the truth at the beck of passions which would thus have been rendered less mischievous.

L

But

But those men must surely ever appear to have been the most in the wrong, who had so conducted themselves, that in order to avert impending evils, it was necessary to aid the triumph of the passions, and to speak falsehood before the sacred majesty of the laws of a great nation. I did not conceal or disguise that truth which was, above all others, the most important to be spoken earnestly and aloud to both sides. I did not act so far wrong, as to leave them ignorant, as not to repeat to them incessantly, that it was not from without, but from among themselves, that the most alarming dangers which could arise against them, were to be feared. The progress of events but too evidently proved, how far I was from being in the wrong, when I incessantly pressed upon them this advice.

Hitherto I have been obliged to make a long discussion of but a small number facts. In the future part of my narrative, I must pass in review over a great number with extraordinary rapidity. Of these, some are already too public to require proof: and in respect to others, there are living witnesses to whom it is easy to appeal. For the most important, I possess an evidence which my enemies have not been able to ravish from me, of which, although they should even take away my life, they cannot deprive me. This is an unlucky circumstance for them. But, if every thing were disposed agreeably to the wishes of a few men in whose bosoms envy and hate still rankle, to the exclusion of all other passions, the world would be altogether theirs: And those who have never
fought

fought to do aught but good, could not make too much haste to quit it.

The Commission of Twelve not willing to make the requisition for the armed force from the Sections of La Butte-de-Moulin, Lepelletier, and Mail, from themselves immediately, had given their orders to the mayor, that is, they had given notice to the Community, to call out its forces likewise, and to give its signal to those Sections which were the most devoted to it. That very night, petitioners from several of the Sections appeared in a body at the bar of the Convention, demanding the *liberation of the imprisoned patriots*, and the *suppression of the Commission of Twelve*. Had not the National Convention been divided into two parties which were *in numbers* almost equal, such an address would have been at once rejected as an insult upon the majesty of the national representation. But the Left Side saw, that here lay its strength, and did not heed the insult which was thus offered to all. The President, now no longer Fonfrede, but Herault de Sechelles, replied to this outrageous insult offered to the whole nation, in words which were an outrage upon human reason: *The force of the people*, said he, *and reason, are ever the same*. The life, and still more the death, of Herault de Sechelles, suggest recollections in the highest degree honourable to his name, and which I shall one day delight to recall. But when an act of his political life accuses him, I must accuse him too. The suppression of the Commission of Twelve was proposed in the House, before the object in view could be clearly understood; it was pro-

nounced from the President's chair to have been decreed, while the decree could not be certainly known to have actually passed. In the words, all was a violation of reason; in the acts, law, and those forms without which law can have no existence, were as flagrantly violated.

And yet, out of the collision of a chaos of passions, there may sometimes spring up a cause, and a transient period—of repose; just as a lottery-wheel will at times throw out a prize amid a multitude of blanks. The suppression of the Commission which had dishonoured itself by so many irregularities, produced some good effects when it was first made known throughout Paris. The members of the Mountain ceasing to entertain, ceased also to communicate, their former fears. At the meetings of the Community, and even of the most turbulent Sections, there was now a talk of peace and quiet. The mayor, whose countenance is not very variable in its expressions, and does not strongly indicate the passions of his soul, now wore an air of pleasing content, like that of a man just relieved from anxious concern for the public welfare, and for his own.

It may seem strange for a person to say so: But it is very true that the *agitators*, those dangerous personages to whom THE TWELVE had laboured to make themselves formidable, were the only men who shewed any concern at the suppression of the Commission. It disarmed them of all cry about *oppression, tyranny, and violated rights*, of all those incitements of popular insurrection, by means of which they had found it easy

to

to conjure up, at pleasure, the storm of insurrection, and to tofs about, at their humour, the unstable force of a democracy, which permanent government had not yet fixed and restrained.

Could I have trusted to the solidity of a benefit obtained by the subversion of every principle, I should now have conceived some hopes of the restoration of public peace. Unfortunately, the Deputies of the Right Side, knew very little of what was passing in Paris, but had a quick and strong sense of what was transacted in the Convention. All night, they were busied in concerting means for procuring those decrees to be rescinded, which had been on the preceding evening voted with the utmost irregularity, or perhaps not voted at all. There was danger in the undertaking: The danger fired them to embrace it but the more ardently. Speeches were uttered, which breathed nothing but magnanimity and energy. From the political pulpit of the Convention, History was seen taking notes for the information of all future ages! That more temperate wisdom, which, in a timid hesitating voice, proposed different counsels, was regarded only as pusillanimity ashamed of itself.—The decree for the suppression of the Twelve was reversed.

Condorcet did not rise to speak for the reversal of that decree.

They thought that they had gained a triumph; but they had in fact decreed the 31st of May, and the 2d of June.

Hardly had this *repeal* been made known in Paris, when

those clamours of the agitators which had been for a moment quieted, were renewed more tumultuously than before. In the Halls of the Sections were loudly heard the voices of men who knew the secret of those words which act with the power of a charm in stirring up commotion. In those meetings in the streets, in which two or three artful men can cunningly disseminate terror, and in which two or three hundred are ready with gaping credulity to receive its impression, to spread, to magnify it; the conversation turned wholly upon the arrest executed since the restoration of *the Twelve*, and the many new arrests which were still to be executed. Some said that the whole Deputation of Paris were to be sent to the *Abbaye*; others, that the intention was, absolutely to exterminate the Mountain. Hebert, who had been set at liberty, but not divested of his fears, or of the means he used to produce a belief that he was still in danger,—now made his appearance once more at the Hall of the Community, and was there honoured with a crown, which he with affected modesty placed upon the brows of the statue of Brutus. He again ascended the place of harrangue at the Hall of the Jacobins, and raised loud the cry of vengeance against the Twelve, whose cares were supposed to be fixed upon the means and the necessity for their executing vengeance on their part.

The mayor came to me in great alarm and anxiety. I could not but share his fears. I went instantly to communicate them to the Committee of Public Safety. And Barrere, one of its members, went that instant

stant to declare what I had told to the Committee of General Security.

Next day, (the 29th of May), between the hours of half after eleven and twelve, notice was brought to me, that there was an assembly collected at the Bishoprick, that it was busy about measures which were said to be intended for the public safety, and that it had named six commissaries. I ran to communicate this news to the *Committee of Public Safety*, and then to the house of the mayor, to interrogate him concerning the nature and intentions of that assembly. The mayor was in bed; but I made them call him up. Of whom was the meeting at the Bishoprick composed? What was the object of their deliberations? Who had appointed them to assemble? Who could those men be, that, close by the National Convention and its Committees, the Executive Council, the Department, the Community, and the Sections, dared to assume, unbidden, the care of the public safety?—All that the mayor could reply to those inquiries was, that the meeting at the Bishoprick consisted of members of the electoral body, of members of the popular societies, of commissaries from several of the Sections: But he assured me, in the tone of a man who knew with certainty the truth of what he was saying, that this Assembly, which he likewise regarded with anxiety and alarm, had recognised, and declared itself to be incompetent for any executive measure,—to be merely a meeting of private citizens concerned for the public welfare. I represented to the mayor, that such a meeting required the utmost vigilance of the chief magistrates of the

police, and that it was his duty to give information to the minister of the home-department of all that passed there,—each day, nay, each hour. The mayor assured me that he would do so, and I then returned to give an account of this conversation, to the Committee of Public Safety.

I must observe, that I went to where the Committee of Twelve had used to hold their meetings; but found no person there. I knew not whether they might not have met elsewhere without giving me notice.

On the day following, every thing appeared to be sufficiently tranquil, and the mayor, whom I had not seen, had given me no information. At night, I was coming away from the Committee of Public Safety:—It was near two in the morning. I received an anonymous note, expressed nearly in these words: *I am just come from the palace of the Bishoprick. By seven in the morning, the Republic will be in mourning.* I then sent to call up Le Tellier, first secretary for the dispatches of my office. He went immediately to Pache, who sent me notice, that the meeting at the palace of the Bishoprick had in fact determined upon adopting executive measures; but had concluded nothing in regard to the nature of those measures: and that it was impossible for any danger to arise from any steps they should take, either that night or on the ensuing day. All, in fact, remained calm during the night: there was indeed nothing that could excite disturbance, unless the Community might be the seat of the conspiracy, and the mayor its head.

Before

Before nine in the morning, the mayor came to my house. He renewed the assurances which he had last night conveyed to me. The fatal *seven in the morning* of my note, was passed, and all was yet well.

But the mayor, at the same time, confessed to me, that the assembly at the palace of the Bishoprick, had assumed a new character; that thirty-eight Sections had sent thither commissaries invested with full revolutionary powers, and that they were gone to join the Jacobins for the purpose of deliberating upon what was proper to be done under the exigency of the present circumstances. Pache, while he thus spake, appeared to me like a man in the agonies of despair at these commotions. He attributed them all to the re-establishment of the Commission of Twelve.

Overcome by fatigue, standing in need of sleep, overwhelmed with anxiety, I however repaired without delay to the Committee of Public Safety, where I found that Pache had already arrived before me,—and then to the palace of Breteuil, to the Commission of Twelve, who had now transferred their sittings thither.—I found only Vigier, and another member of the Commission, whose name I cannot now recollect. I know not whether he may have escaped assassination, or may, like Vigier, have fallen by its arms. But the result of my conversation with them, I wrote down, and printed, with the intention of making it public while those two representatives were alive. In the notes to this narrative, I have given it a place; and it will serve to shew, that none with whom I could have

have an opportunity of speaking, could have any suspicions in respect to me.

On that same day, or one of the days preceding or following, (I cannot with certainty fix the day), Champagneux, the chief officer of the first division of the internal department, brought me a great number of copies of an hand-bill, in which Robespierre, Marat, Danton, Chaumette, and Pache, who was in it called the *Political Escobar*, were accused of holding nocturnal councils at Charenton; where, under the protection for a formidable armed force, they deliberated upon the means for exciting new massacres like those of the month of September.—I, that instant, carried the hand-bill to the Committee of Public Safety, and seized a moment for communicating it when neither Danton nor Lacroix was present. The Committee entered, I think, upon a secret register, a resolution, that all the copies of the hand-bill should be destroyed, that secrecy should be required of him who had put them into my hands, and that I should go to Charenton itself for farther information. I knew no person there: There were few to whom the task of such an inquiry could be trusted: Champagneux knew, however, one citizen of that place, of whose prudence and integrity he assured me. To him he wrote; and the answer he received was calculated much more to dispel than to confirm the suggestions of the hand-bill.—Champagneux's friend engaged also to communicate any further information he might be able to obtain concerning the matter. These facts respect Champagneux equally with myself, and can be
attested

attested by that excellent citizen, as well as by me ; for to him I have often opened my whole soul in respect to the events which passed, and to their causes. Champagneux's indefatigable application did the greatest honour to the administration of his friend Roland, and he devoted himself with zeal equally unwearyed to the service of my administration. Yet, Champagneux, but for cruelly unjust persecution, would not have obtained that celebrity with which public gratitude alone ought to have rewarded his labours.

I myself, my friends, those persons whom I had set, at that crisis, to watch the fluctuations of the public mind, were continually vigilant. I was anxious to mark the smallest commotion, to hear the slightest word that passed.

On *Thursday*, the 30th of May, a citizen wrote to me, that at his Section, it had been said to have been finally resolved in the meeting at the Bishoprick, that the barriers should that night be shut, the alarm-bells rung, the minute-guns fired. I had hardly read the note myself, when I went to read it to the Committee of Public Safety, and gave notice that I was about to present it to be read to the Convention, which was then assembled. Lacroix de l'Eure, who that night did not for a moment quit the Committee of Public Safety, at which he was commonly more remiss in his attendance,—rose to speak. He said, that for a note repeating what had been said at the meeting of one of the Sections, we ought not to alarm the National Convention ; that we ought first of all to ascertain the fact, and to call before the Committee of Public
safety,

Safety, the constituted authorities which were responsible for the general security,—the department, and the mayor. The Committee, abiding by this advice, sent a note to request the attendance of the *Procureur-general-syndic*, and I went to the Hall of the Community, to find the mayor.

He that moment came in. He mounted the great stair-case, with ten or twelve men at his back, who had each a pistol in every pocket.

The mayor then whispered in my ear these words, which no one will be surprised that I should so distinctly remember. *All opposition from me was vain. I could not prevent it. They have declared by a resolution, that the Community of Paris, and the department which they represent, are in a state of insurrection.* I replied, *The Committee of Public Safety command you to attend them; and you will accompany me thither.* He went into the General Council, there he published what he had communicated to me, and declared even more formally, that the insurrection had been determined upon, contrary to his advice, and in spite of all his opposition.—I heard tumultuous bursts of applause, which shook the room. I thought myself suddenly transported to Tauris.

The moment he had ended speaking, the mayor came alone into my carriage.

By the way, I earnestly represented to him what terrible mischiefs his news foreboded. I stated to him, that at a moment when we are at war with all Europe, any great convulsion in the capital, the seat of all the national establishments, might prevent all supplies from

from being sent to our fleets and armies. Amid so many other unpromising presages, this was what struck me the most, because it was the very plan which, above all others, we might suppose the combined slaves and tyrants of Europe desirous to carry into effect against us. The mayor, expressing the same fears, and the same sorrow, agreed with me in lamenting those terrible contests of the passions which alone could render such flagitious enterprises possible. Amid this conversation, we reached the Hall of the Committee of Public Safety.

L'Huillier, the *Procureur-general-syndic* of the department, with two other members of the Directory, were already there. From the confessions, or rather declarations, which they all made, one clear unambiguous inference was obviously to be drawn; namely, that the department of Paris was already, by its approbation and engagements, in what is called a state of insurrection.

Pache was far from speaking in the style in which L'Huillier spoke. He related facts without signifying either approbation or blame, with solemn sadness and gravity of manner.

While they were deliberating, I arose and declared my purpose of giving the Convention an immediate account of the whole. *You are not*, interrupted Lacroix, *a member of the Committee of Public Safety; and in such circumstances, it is their business to transmit this notice by one of their members.* He was then desired to make the communication to the Convention: and he went away upon that pretence. Half an hour after, he had not made
his

his communication : And the sitting had broken up before he could present himself at the bar.

The members of the department, and of the mayor's court, frequently repeated to the Convention, that, while they were at their posts, there should no act of violence be committed in the insurrection. It was there, for the first time, and from the mouth of L'Huillier, that I heard the words *moral insurrection*, which were next day inserted in their papers. And it was L'Huillier who made a moral insurrection against Vergniaude and Condorcet !

There was no sleep for my eyes amid these tempests which shook the Republic. I had no need to be awakened by the alarum-bell, or the minute-guns. On the 31st of May, I was in the courts of the National Palace, by five in the morning, while they were as yet almost empty.

The first man I met there was Danton.

Of this I took particular notice, and it served to fix all my attention upon him.

What means all this ? said I, going up to him. Cannot you tell ? Who moves the springs, and what do they want ? *Bah ! nothing at all*, replied Danton ; *we must let them break some printing-presses ; and all will then be well again*. Ah ! Danton, I fear, they mean something more than the breaking of printing-presses.—*Well, then watch them*.—You have that in your power much more than I.

I went then to the Convention, where there were as yet but a few members met. The little I knew, that I told

told them : what I did not know, I could not declare. Cambon knowing no more than I, could say neither more nor less. But L'Huillier came to the bar, and this was a great day of talk for him. It is known how he spoke before the national representatives : what was done, what was prepared on that day, is known. The equally prudent and dignified motion of Vergniaud, is well known ; a motion formed to bring to the defence of the National Convention, that very armed force which had been roused against it. All these facts, which their notoriety and authenticity have made known to all the world, are reserved for the sacred pen, and the immortal pages of history.

On the next day (the 1st of June) all Paris appeared to have resumed its former respect for the laws, and for the National Convention. But the members of the Committee of Insurrection were constantly coming and going into, and out of, the Committee of Public Safety. The legislators were constrained to deliberate in concert with the violators of all the laws. When there remained so little power to the Committee of Public Safety, in which rested at that time the whole national government, of which the great majority was irreproachable and pure ; it may be conceived, that a minister could be good for nothing, but to decry all propositions that came from his mouth. I, however, never left the Committee : I seized every occasion of presenting those views which seemed to me the most likely to enable us to fill up the fatal gulph which had opened all around us.

One of those views seemed for a moment to revive the hopes of every good mind.

However thick and dark to me, those clouds which concealed the particular and immediate cause of these commotions ; there was yet one general cause to which I ascribed all the rest, and without the support of which I was sure that no other cause could have acted with so much boldness. That was the division of the National Convention into two sides, and the mutual hatreds subsisting between those members who had respectively the chief influence upon each of the sides. I recollected, that, in Athens, similar hatreds cherished between those two potent citizens, Aristides and Themistocles, had often nearly ruined the republic : that even Themistocles offered good advice, and Aristides saw it to be good ; yet the latter opposed it, and procured its rejection, because it came from Themistocles. I remembered that this virtuous man, who could do no wrong without confessing it, had one day exclaimed, when urged by conscience, “ Oh Athenians ! you will never be peaceable and “ happy, till you cast both Themistocles and me into “ the *Barathrum*,” (a deep pit into which condemned criminals were cast). This cry of conscience from the lips of a good man, who accused himself with so much magnanimity, reaching my heart after the lapse of so many centuries, had made me conceive the idea of a resolution which it would have been noble for a few members of the French Convention to form. I proposed that of the two sides, those members whose mutual hatred was the best known,

those whose personal quarrels had divided the representatives of *one* people into *two* parties, should offer of themselves, to retire from the Convention, to leave it to the prosecution of those labours which their broils interrupted, to make themselves hostages for the public tranquillity, to await, in that glorious ostracism, the restored reign of the laws, and the judgment of the nation, which would then have nothing but blessings to bestow on both the one and the other. Several members of the Committee of Public Safety seemed to be affected with this idea, which I with great emotion held out to them; particularly Delmas, Cambon, and Barrere. Danton arose with tears in his eyes, and cried, *I shall propose it instantly to the Convention; and I offer myself to go the first, as an hostage, to Bourdeaux.* I immediately wrote upon several pages, the proposition, and some considerations intended to excite those generous and exalted affections which were necessary to support and embrace it. But Barrere was the only person who proposed it to the Convention: Lanthenas was the only one that arose, and offered to go into exile. And I came afterwards to know, that an idea which had been embraced with enthusiasm in the Committee, but was imprudently communicated to the Convention, with the solemnity of a *speech from the tribune*, was treated by Robespierre as a *snare held out for the patriots*. Such, in truth, have been the only snares that were ever held out by me; but it is not by such snares that men like Robespierre are to be caught.

There was in Paris no force that could prevent the events of the 2d of June. All the force of Paris had

M

been

been put in requisition, for the purpose of bringing them about.

The storm at last burst: the thunder roared: the lightning flashed from the bosom of the collected clouds.

This is not the place for me to declare, with what emotions I beheld, and how I judged of—it.

While the National Convention was in a state of siege, the Executive Council was in confinement. Lebrun, Grouvelle, and myself, went for a moment to take the air in one of the narrow courts before the national palace. Men armed with pistols and sabres instantly let us know, that we must, perforce, get us back within the gate.

When the arrestment of the proscribed deputies was obtained, I owe it as a testimony to truth, and to the virtue of those who even then were not afraid to risk their life and liberty for her sake,—to declare, that astonishment and indignation were the predominant sentiments in the breast of almost every member of the Committee of Public Safety and of the Executive Council. The change of the times shall make no change upon my manner of bearing witness to facts which are past, and cannot change. Breard, suffering at that time from a fit of the gout, was hardly able to walk about; nevertheless, he came from the Convention to inform us, that it was then at the mercy of a herd of ruffians. Cambon, turning to Bouchotte, addressed him in these words: *Minister at war, we are not so blind as not to see, that men employed by your offices are at the head of all this.*

Barrere

Barrere incessantly said, *We must see,—we must see whether it be the Community of Paris, or the Convention, which represents the French Republic.* Delmas and Treilhard were both, I believe, sick; but their sentiments, which differed not from those of their colleagues, have since been no less precisely and energetically expressed. Lacroix seemed in some degree of embarrassment, like one who shares a triumph in which there is little glory, but may be great danger. Danton seemed uneasy and ashamed. Bouchotte, who speaks but little at any time, said then nothing at all. I saw not Pache at either the Committee or the Council. Although I did not clearly see through the mystery of what was passing, and had my mind filled with many suspicions, yet I spoke out what I thought without great caution or reserve.—The hour for address and delicacy in speaking one's sentiments, was past; that of death or silence, had not yet come. I talked in one style to those in whom I had confidence, and to those whom I viewed with distrust. That very evening, at the board of the Executive Council, I wrote my resignation. My resolution was fixed against remaining in a place in which I had not the power to prevent evil, yet, not preventing it, must appear its accomplice.

Next day, all my friends conjured me at least to delay my resignation. None but Ducos and Condorcet should have prevailed. Its being pregnant with danger to myself, could not have altered my purpose. They were of opinion, that, by remaining in office, I might either prevent greater mischiefs which were

yet to come, or might at least keep a watch upon men whose guilty purposes we suspected.

I was surrounded with spies: I became myself a spy upon Danton and Lacroix.—I watched, as diligently as I possibly could, all their steps.—I caught and treasured up, as carefully as I could, all their words. For some days, I thought myself to be in the train of detecting a grand conspiracy against the Republic. Ducos, Barrere, Cambon, Condorcet, Treilhard, and even Alquier, if I mistake not, received the confidential communication of my observations, conjectures, and suspicions.—Surrounded, as I have said, by spies, who never left me, I did not scruple to give them the trouble of following me to the door of Genfonnè, and even to the door of Vergniaud, both of whom I went to see, when they were under arrest. Unfortunately, I did not find them so entirely by themselves, as that I could then communicate, without reserve, what I thought of the measures which it was proper to take, in order to deliver both them and the Republic out of the dangers in which they were then involved.

The generous and unfortunate Ducos, who was dear to me almost as my own nephews, was afraid to see me, for fear of drawing upon my head that malice which pursued all his friends, and was soon to bring him to death with them.—But it would have ill become me to avail myself of this tenderness of his. During those days, he several times dined with me,—once in company with Mathieu, the representative of the people.

people. Mathieu can tell how we were occupied during the dinner at which he was present.

I can have no need of any testimony which Pache may have it in his power to give in my favour: nor do I know how far he may be disposed to give or to deny that testimony which truth shall require from him, But if Pache's inclination be at one with his duty, which I wish not more for my sake than for his own, Pache also can tell how,—on the 3d of June, when he came in the morning to the office in which I presided, how I spoke to him of what had passed, on the preceding evening, in the Convention, and of what was about to follow in the departments. The mayor of Paris seemed to be in anxiety of mind; and it is not easy to bring him into such a state: I am inclined to think, that it might bethe sketch which I warmly drew to him of the evils I foresaw to France from what had happened among us.

I began at length to be convinced, from some new facts which I ascertained, and from the more careful discrimination of others which were before but loosely known to me, that my suspicions of Danton and Lacroix, if at bottom well founded, went, however, a great way beyond the truth.

But, if we had not all the crimes of treason to fear; yet opening events gave us every reason to dread all the mischiefs of civil war. Some departments were taking arms, and beginning to rise in insurrection. And according to our different interests and passions, commotions were expected or feared to happen in all. Of the deputies who had been put under arrest, on

the 2d of June, some had fled, and had gone to raise up for themselves avengers ; others had remained in the hands of their enemies, with the same submission as if they had been in the hands only of the law. Such was the present state of things : and in this state of things, *these* were my thoughts, my resolutions, the steps of conduct which I took.

If by any general insurrection, or by the insurrection of a very great majority, the departments of the French Republic had advanced in arms to Paris, and had, with the sacred majestic voice of the real people, demanded the liberation of the imprisoned representatives, their restoration to their seats, and the sanctuary of the laws, the hushed silence of every passion, and the punishment of those whom the fury of the passions had hurried into crimes ; this grand and awful act of national justice would no doubt have exalted the glory of the French Republic in the eyes of all Europe : such an act would have given the weighty authority, the luminous illustration of a positive and indelible fact, to those principles of the social art which are too vast or too profound to be generally understood, while they exist only in theory, without being exemplified in practice. It would have saved France. It would have saved Paris, which has suffered as much as the rest of the Republic, and has besides had the misfortune of being the central receptacle of every party, and of every crime.

I doubt not but it must have been this grand idea which produced, after the 31st of May, the project of exciting all the departments to insurrection. But its

very

very grandeur, which would be its recommendation to those by whom it was imagined, is what also made it somewhat chimerical. It was impossible that so many departments should be all at once moved and actuated by the same spirit, especially as it was a spirit of profound wisdom which was to be supposed. It was impossible that, in even any one department, the same spirit should animate all the citizens composing it ; especially since for near a year past, dissension had been studiously sown between the *administrators* and those subject to their administration, between the rich and the poor. It was hardly possible, that out of so many separate insurrections, which must be made with great impetuosity, there should be formed one grand insurrection, to advance with order and regularity against Paris.

Nevertheless, these insurrections, could they have been unanimous, might have saved all : if partial, they could not fail to ruin all. In the first case, civil war would have been prevented ; in the second, it would have been necessarily produced.

The end then which was held in view, could not be attained without a sort of miracle. Those by whom it was proposed, acted without concert, without union in their measures.—I speak of the proscribed deputies who were in Paris.

To accomplish the purposes they had in view with some success, it would have been requisite for them to have either all fled to the departments, or to have all remained at Paris.—Had they been all in the departments, their influence would have been more exten-

five and more important —Even by their number— number to which the human imagination always associates an idea of grandeur and majesty,—they would have removed every thing like an air of flight; they would have carried with them the dignity of virtuous retreat; and wherever they had retired in a body, there would have been the MONS SACER.

Remaining together at Paris, they might still have made those enemies tremble, who were hastening to fate their rage in *their* blood. France would not have endured to see the National Convention in a dungeon. —Had there been so many legislators to be brought in one day to the block, both judges and executioners would have shrunk back with horror, and would have cried, *No, we dare not lift up our hands against the National Representation!* By their number, much more than their innocence or their virtues, have the seventy-three been saved.

But of the deputies who were put under arrest, on the 2d of June, some went to rouse the cry of war in the departments: others, like Socrates, remained in prison, when they might have made their escape. The conduct of these contributed to give to the conduct of the rest an air of revolt: and the movements of those who sought to raise forces, being imputed as a crime to all, left it hardly possible for the burning thirst of vengeance to respect the life of those whom it had loaded with fetters.

Such inconsiderateness of determination in matters of so high importance, is, in addition to many others, one striking proof, that those men were united in principle indeed, and by their common desire to serve the

the

the Republic, but not in any conspiracy, not in any cabal, even against the dark-minded adversaries who sought their ruin!—Alas! their memory wants not this proof of their innocence: But their safety, *their* lives, and the lives of those many thousands of citizens who were destined to bleed after them, upon the scaffold, needed a conduct more ably concerted, or more happily inspired.

My conduct in such circumstances, had nearly the same difficulties to encounter as theirs, but was, I apprehend, regulated upon more mature deliberation. Yet, it succeeded no better than their own, for the purpose of saving them: And it will immediately appear, that the sword was for some moments suspended by a breaking thread over my safety,—if safety it can be called to have escaped with these poor remains of a life so ungenerously defamed by all parties, so cruelly tormented!

When I submitted to the misery of remaining in the administration, I held in view three capital objects, in respect to which I have ever shewn myself tender.

The *first* was, to employ all possible means in order to convert the threatened commotions of the departments into negotiations, between the respective administrative bodies and the committees of government, for the purpose of preventing the outbreaks of civil war. The *second* was, to hasten the acceptance of the constitution, which was then in great forwardness, and to prepare men's minds—in Paris by my conversation—in the departments by a memoir which I addressed to them, for seizing the moment when the

new

new constitution should be solemnly proclaimed, and with it to proclaim an amnesty of all that was past, from the conquerors to the conquered, and equally from the conquered to—the conquerors, who stood the most in need of it. The *third* was, here to watch over that thirst of bloodshed which I had reason to fear in regard to the confined deputies, and with all my might to oppose its gratification.

As to what I did for the attainment of my *first* object, I here call upon the testimony of all the surviving members of the then Committee of Public Safety. They will all, assuredly, bear witness, that I unweariably bespoke them in favour of reconciliation and reunion;—declared the republican virtues and errors of all parties;—insisted upon the necessity of a general oblivion of all that was past,—but never of contests to be pursued, of a victory to be gained, of punishments, however slight, to be inflicted.—Moreover, I can call upon the testimony of others beside legislators, in support of this truth. All facts were not concealed in the bosom of the Committee: there were material facts of which portions were displayed in the full light of the Convention; and those portions so solemn, and so public, of my conduct, are clear specimens of the tenor of the whole to which they belong.

Hardly was the district of Calvados in motion for an insurrection, when I received from a commission, by which all the commotions were directed, two or three letters; in one of which they spoke to me of my *virtuous neutrality*, and made a demand for grain; in another was written: *Tremble; for the banners of the*

North and of the South are displayed: they march to Paris: Tremble; they who starve shall be treated as those who assassinate! The letters were signed Caille and Pourgon. I did tremble, but it was for those who could write such letters; the letters I carried not either to the Convention or to the Committee: nor did I make them any reply. But to the Committee, in which measures were already taken for the purpose of sending troops against Calvados, I earnestly represented, that negociation ought to precede attack;—that it would be beautiful and happy to terminate all in pacific measures, which might put an end not only to this threatened intestine war, but to the contests and hatred which had kindled it up.

After I had tried all the force of reasoning, I affirmed, in that tone of sincere persuasion, which, as it issues from the heart, descends into it with the energy of passion, that conciliatory measures would have infallible success; that civil war, when ready to break out, calls forth eloquence of no common energy from the soul of him who speaks in order to avert its horrors; that, if they would send me to Calvados, I should return from it with tidings of tranquillity and peace.

I was told, that in Calvados I was detested; I would be arrested there; nay, that one scoundrel or another would do something worse for me: and that a minister for the Internal Department ought to be always at Paris. I replied, that I knew Guadet and Barbaroux to have at bottom, in their hearts, sentiments of esteem for me, which I could easily rekindle

to their wonted fervour; that it could not be but that when they saw me come to them on such an errand, the very choice of me for the messenger must be regarded as a clear proof of the reality of those proposals of pacification which were held out; and that all parts of the Republic in which he could be of service were alike the proper posts of a minister of internal affairs.

In the Committee, and in the Council, it was agreed that I should go to Calvados, but not till the Convention should have been informed, and should have sanctioned this commission with their approbation.

St Juste was present at this discussion. When we came to a resolution, he made offer of himself to go with me to Calvados. I cannot say, whether he were then capable of such meanness and artifice, as to be willing to degrade the dignity of the legislator, to the baseness of acting as a spy upon the minister; or whether he might not in fact at that time feel the influence of some of those virtuous sentiments which pass through the hearts of the wicked, without leaving any traces behind them. But there proceeded at that time, from his lips, an expression which will seem very strange, when compared with his subsequent conduct, an expression which his *reports* and crimes have often since recalled to my mind: *I think as you do*, said St Juste, *I believe it possible to lead men even by a single hair*. Three months after, he thought that the only way to lead the one half, was by cutting off the heads of the other!

Thomas Linder was likewise present at the same discussion, in the quality of a deputy, if I remember right,

right, from either Eure, or Calvados. It was he made the report to the Convention : I was present : He did it like an honest man, who thought the measure good, and wished it to be adopted. But Lacroix of the Eure, whose desire was, not to negotiate with his enemies, but to destroy them,—under pretence of concern for my welfare, procured the proposal, for sending a minister to Calvados, to be haughtily rejected.

A period of delay had been granted, within which it was declared, that the administrators of any of those departments which had raised the standard of rebellion, might return within the bounds of their duty, without being subject to punishment for what they had done. When this period had nearly expired, I felt all my hopes of preventing civil war, to expire with it. I resolved, without acquainting the Committee, to request from the Convention a prolongation of the term of delay. In order to give them that disposition to benevolence, which good news usually produces in a great assembly ; I related as a preamble to my request, an account of several advantages obtained over our external enemies, which I had gained notice of by means of my correspondence, but which it did not properly belong to me to report. The news were favourably received ; I made my request ; and for a moment thought that I should succeed. But hardly had Robespierre heard it, and observed its likelihood of success, when he arose in anger, and indignantly rejected it. He ended his speech against it in these words, which have long remained in my remembrance,

membrance, for they affected me with even greater indignation than he had felt against my proposal: *You have been clement but too long: you ought, you desire to save the Republic. And you must therefore cause the sword of the laws to descend upon their guilty heads.*

Oppressed with sorrow, and with gloomy prefages of what was to happen, upon leaving the Convention, I took a walk with my nephew, among the trees of the Thuilleries. I saw Legendre and Carrier pass by. I did not then know the first, otherwise than by some grand emotions of his mind: The other I knew to be a man void of all delicacy in ideas or in language; but he had not yet astonished and shocked the world by his atrocious cruelties. I eagerly joined them, and acquainted them with what was passing in my breast; with all the horrible consequences which I dreaded from those rigorous measures into which Robespierre was hurrying the Convention. At every word Carrier interrupted me; Legendre, on the contrary, interrupted Carrier, shewed an inclination to hear me, did hear me with every appearance of emotion and of deep thought. It was easy for me to perceive that Legendre felt as I felt myself. Carrier spared me the trouble of being left to guess at his wishes. I shall here repeat an expression, consistent with his stupid ferocity, which fell from his lips at a time when the exterminating system was not yet established as the law of the government: this expression cannot perhaps give any thing of new horror to the name of Carrier: *No, no, said he, Brissot and Genfonne must feel the pulse of the guillotine: they must dance there.* O, France! O, my country!

And

And was this one of thy legislators, when thou didst exalt thyself to the high destiny of a republic?

Calvados, in consequence of the representation of the people, having retired thither, was the object of my principal attention. But Lyons, and Bourdeaux too, had my constant regard. Each day I made some new attempt to make the Committee of Public Safety adopt just notions of the real disposition of those two important cities,—and of the dispositions in which it became us to view them, and to take measures for preventing the ills with which they were threatened.

I could not help being sensible, that in Lyons, aristocracy and royalism were carrying on some deep and dark intrigues, under the disguise of the national colours. Biron, born in the cast of the feudal nobility, but formed by the soundness of his judgement, by the native elevation of his mind, even by the careless indifference of his temper, to view with strong sentiments of ridicule, all those chimeras of pride, in defence of which the blood of men was shed upon the earth;—Biron, in the month of February, wrote to me from Lyons: “Royalism and aristocracy have
“ here a source unfathomably deep, and streams
“ more numerous, and more extensively branched
“ out, than can be easily imagined.” This letter, that instant I received it, I read it to the Committee of General Security.

But I had likewise other information respecting Lyons; information received from two men in whom I had as much confidence as in Biron, and who had both passed longer time than he there.

The

The one was Gonchon, a man who had gained great favour with the people, in their own way ; who who was long a famous orator in the suburb of Saint Antoine ; who had often led the mob of Paris, without hurrying them astray ; who strove to lead them, not for his own sake, but for theirs : a man rather of passions, than of principles ; but whose passions being only those of nature, did not subject him to be duped either by an aristocrate, in the guise of a friend to the revolution, or by a revolutionist, whose sword, like the scythe of death, is ready to give men solely the equality of the grave.

The other was Lenoir de la Roche, a well-informed and thinking man ; enlightened as well by the judgment of others as by his own ; formed to estimate men by their principles, principles by the observation and experience of men ; a member of the Constituent Assembly, and who, if he could have been persuaded to speak, would have been one of its oracles.

I knew not if Lenoir de le Roche and Gonchon ever met at Lyons : but it was impossible for any two accounts more perfectly to coincide, than did those which they both wrote me, concerning the state of men's minds at that time in the city of Lyons.

The substance of what I learned from the correspondence of both, was, that it was not against liberty the Sections of Lyons had risen in insurrection, but against the cruelties and acts of robbery perpetrated in its name, by that man Challier, who was the pupil of Marat, and followed him as his model ; that the rich
manufacturers

manufacturers of Lyons, although they could not be every one a Brutus, would however be very good and generous citizens, if the Republic, whose first duty is, to protect with all its authority the lives and properties of all, would give to the Lyonnese the full assurance, that they would not be put to death because they were rich, and then their families robbed of their wealth because they had been put to death :—That, finally, the most artful royalists, although more numerous at Lyons than any where else, on account of the proximity of Switzerland, and of the emigrants ; yet could not draw any person of consequence into their perfidious schemes, otherwise than by suggesting to men already reduced to despair,—what force, and what sanctions the Republic ought to give them, but yet withheld.

It may be naturally conceived, that when St Juste, Couthon, and Robespierre, were members of the Committee of Public Safety ; the interests of the Lyonnese, of my correspondents, even my own interest, required me to be very cautious in communicating the above information. Yet I did communicate it, and as being, in my opinion, the most accurate and faithful of all that was then transmitted to us concerning Lyons.

When the Lyonnese produced their proposals, among which were many both just and reasonable ; I was far from desiring that we should treat with them in the tone of one power treating with another. I felt what was due to the majesty of the nation, and how much it became her representatives to support her

rights. But I could have had no idea that there was in a republican government, any necessity for that despotic pride which refuses a thing precisely because it is demanded; had I not seen, in a thousand instances, that men of narrow understandings, and hard hearts, suppose it possible to aggrandize themselves, and to gratify their personal pride, by exercising, not the beneficence—which to them seems weakness,—but the severity—of the power they represent.

I said one day to the Committee of Public Safety, when almost all the members were present, “The
 “revolutionary government has been restored for the
 “purpose of directing and restraining, by the operation of *one* will and *one* force, all those thousands
 “of discordant and irregular movements to which
 “the revolution has given rise.—Employ this force,
 “then, which must be absolute, to preserve, not to
 “destroy; employ it to establish, provisionally, a governing force in Lyons, which may be—not that
 “of the Sections, not that of the Community of this
 “city, but yours,—the force of the Convention, the
 “force of the nation. Restrain all parties, in order
 “to hinder them from tearing one another in pieces,
 “and in order to spare yourselves the future necessity
 “of punishing crimes, because you have failed to prevent them.”

I know not if, while he heard me speak, Couthon fancied himself already at Lyons, exercising an uncontrollable and merciless power. But he seemed to be, he was actually, persuaded. He was about to give his support to my motion, when Robespierre arising,

ing, said, " If I rightly understand you, your proposal is, that we destroy a patriotic community. " This is contrary to our principles. The revolutionary government is formed to maintain, not to " destroy." Such words, and such principles, reduced us all to silence.

Who does not with horror recollect, how those same men afterwards treated both those same principles, and a community that could not be less dear to them !

Had my measure been then embraced, had it been carried into execution with dignity and moderation ; the Sections thus powerfully supported against the intolerable oppression of the Community, would have contended against the royalists with that intrepidity which they displayed on the 29th of May. That proud city, the boast of France, the envy and admiration of Europe, might still have stood ; those myriads of citizens which were buried under its ruins, might still have lived, to protect and adorn the Republic. O God ! how many ills which might have been easily prevented, have the frantic pride and resentment of three or four men, poured out upon France ! O France ! of what infinite importance is it to thee, in order to the prevention of all those calamities, and the production of all those benefits which may flow from the exercise of thy sovereign power,—that thou elect only such minds and such dispositions to represent thee, as are worthy of being not only thy representatives, but the representatives of human reason !—

Woe to him, who, when defending his own innocence,

cence, through fear of involving it in suspicions, avails himself not of the opportunity to render an honourable testimony to the merits of those whose conduct has appeared to him worthy of esteem ! From among those representatives of the people whose conduct became known to me, I should deem myself odiously culpable, if I did not here make honourable mention of Robert Lindet. He was chosen to go upon this *mission*, because it was expected, that he would there give full scope to the exercise of that resentment which had been raised in his mind by atrociously defamatory pamphlets, written against him by the partizans of the cause of the Sections. Robert Lindet has, in fact, sometimes shewn himself to be but too tremblingly alive to the sense of such calumnies. But his hottest anger, his most furious bursts of passion, were calmed and overcome by the more potent force of truth and moral rectitude presented to his conscience : and at Lyons, as well as in the district of Calvados, whither he was sent on his return from Lyons,—if he remembered his resentments ; it was solely to prolong the pleasure he enjoyed in triumphing over them. —Wherever he went, he conducted himself invariably with that moderation which reason and moral rectitude impose as a law, upon the fiercest passions of the human heart.

Of all the cities of the Republic, which were to me subjects of continual anxiety, Bourdeaux, in which I had passed the happiest years of my youth, in which I believed myself to have many friends, and
not

not an enemy, was that for which I had the most torturing apprehensions.

When a deputation from the Gironde, represented at the bar of the Convention, and in hand-bills posted up on the walls,—the complaints and menaces of that injured department; the speech was delivered, the hand-bills were composed, by a man with whom I had lived in the strictest intimacy,—Duvignau.

Another in my place, perhaps, and watched by spies, as I was, would have fearfully avoided any intercourse with him at this time. I, on the contrary, earnestly fought it; I had but too much occasion to confide all the fears and agonies of my soul, to a man who was my friend, and who had spoken in behalf of a town, the remembrance of which has ever been no less dear to me, than that of the place of my birth. He dined with me three or four times; and at one of those times we were alone. I employed all the influence of truth and friendship, to persuade him of the true state of persons and affairs,—to give him just notions of the nature of dangers which were not very great, but dangers of which the vain imagination alarmed the inhabitants of Bourdeaux.—His firm persuasion was, that Robespierre and the Community of Paris had conspired to raise Orleans to a throne; that Orleans had promised Robespierre to make him his prime minister for life,—and had promised the Community to turn the *national* into a *municipal* representation, in which the representatives of Paris should be exclusively legislators for all France. One day, Duvignau, his eyes swimming in tears, and his breast

convulsed with indignation, informed me of this conspiracy, of the reality of which he had himself no doubt.

I waited till the emotion of his soul had subsided ; for I knew him to be exceedingly passionate, though very variable in his temper.

To remove that illusion from his imagination, I reminded him of a series of facts which were very certain, and which he himself could not contest. When I had thus recalled him from a visionary world, to that which was actually before and around us ; I then explained to him the true state of things. He shuddered at it, as well as I, but with a different sort of terror. He again shed tears, but tears which fell—for the Republic falling without having one sincere enemy among us,—and for his old friend, who, although calumniated, fully knew so many truths, which he could neither exalt to triumph, nor even make others comprehend. To combine us more inseparably in the same fate, to give us a very natural means for concerting our measures in a regular correspondence ; I offered him, and he accepted, one of those commissions for inspection in the departments, which I was then creating.

If Collot D' Herbois, when he made me to be arrested on account of this institution, had known of my correspondence with Duvignau, how would I have been overwhelmed by the torrent of his eloquence ! Yes, there are occasions, this I know by sure experience, when the good things we have done are precisely those which will the best serve our enemies for a pretence to bring us, loaded with indelible infamy, to the scaffold.

I know not in what disposition of mind Duvignau arrived at Bourdeaux, nor how he expressed himself there. When the blasts of passion and of party-spirit blow with so much violence in all directions, it is impossible for one to promise any thing of minds so fickle and passionate. And although endowed with valuable qualities, Duvignau, merely to avoid being called a weak man, was capable of rushing headlong into any piece of extravagance.

After the 31st of May, and the 2d of June, and when we were informed that Bourdeaux was about to send an armed force against us ; I was almost sure that there was no such force on foot : or that, if on foot, being weak in numbers, uncertain in its purposes, without any considerable military stores,—it might be stopped and arrested twenty times before it could reach the banks of the Loire ; and that the only effect of those revolutionary commotions, would be to expose to terrible punishments, the men who should be found to have excited them, and who, almost all, were either my college-companions, or the friends of my youth. I had meant to send my nephew to Bourdeaux, and he would have seen all this, not merely as a person sent from me, but as my very self ; his connections were still more recent, more intimate, more tender with diverse members of the Popular Commission of Bourdeaux, particularly with Serre, by whom he had been beloved as by a brother or a father ; with Serre, whom the energy of his mind and character wholly devoted to the party he had embraced ; but whose firm reason was ill fitted for the delirium of party, of which I myself

had seen him the determined enemy during the Legislative Assembly; with Serre, who, void of ambition and private passions, put himself at the head of all danger, in order to sacrifice himself, if necessary, for the sake of the friends he had in the deputation from the department of the Gironde.

I gave up this design, when they talked of sending to Bourdeaux two representatives of the people; and I thenceforth only sought to contribute as much as possible in order to make the choice fall upon men to whom the city of Bourdeaux might be disposed to listen with the confidence due to reason, impartiality, and wisdom.—I have reason to believe, that I first suggested the appointment of Trielhard and Matthieu, to those who had it in their power to propose them to the Convention.—I could not but hope a great deal from them, and perhaps fear a great deal for their personal safety.—I was afraid, that amid the contrary extravagancies of party-rage, they might suffer on all hands, because they had gone into no such extravagancy: that by the Gironde, they might be taken for members of the Mountain; by the Mountain, for Girondines. I said so then, and all the world knows that it afterwards turned out precisely so.

The situation of a minister was, at that period, strange and cruel! He was, in some sort, obliged to plot good, as bad men would plot evil, to endeavour the execution of the purest intentions by covered and oblique means. Whatever good he had done, or sought to do, being concealed amid the clouds in which he was involved, left him liable to be blamed
for

for all the ill which took place in spite of him, and made him share the hatred with which those men were regarded, whom he himself saw with the greatest horror.

At the same time, when I was using all the means in my power, with incessant diligence, for the purpose of removing from Lyons, Bourdeaux, and Calvados, those destructive scourges which seemed ready to descend upon them ; I was, myself, represented in all those places, as one of the scourges of the Republic. That hand-bill, concerning the sanguinary orgies at Charenton, which I had hindered from being posted up, but had sent to the Committee of Public Safety, was reprinted at Lyons, and to all the other names which it contained, when first sent to me, was now added my own. At Bourdeaux, even at Bourdeaux, where my heart flattered me that I had left a more indelible remembrance of what I really was,—at Bourdeaux, the Popular Commission represented me, in its proclamations, as the minister of party-rage, as one of the chiefs of anarchists, minions of faction, assassins. In the departments of the North and South, there was a printed letter circulated, in which I was denounced to the whole Republic, as an usurper and co-partner in the supreme power with Danton, Robespierre, and Marat ! Hence that association, alike shocking and ridiculous, of the names of Garat and Marat, one of the artifices which were employed by expiring aristocracy, in order to confound him who always honoured,—him who sometimes illuminated—the revolution, with him who could only deform it with horrors, devastation, and bloodshed.

shed. This conjunction of these two names, a striking instance of the operation of that spirit of calumny by which it was made,—was called to the aid of men who had so many claims to be considered as the heroic defenders of the revolution, of virtue, of the the Republic! In Calvados, the language which was clamoured in every ear, so deformed me in the eyes of a woman who was capable of magnanimous resolutions, that she whetted for me the same dagger, which she intended to plunge into the breast of one of the most worthless men that have ever yet disgraced human existence. That art was even then practised, which we have since seen to make the most alarming progress: an art which was also practised by the tyrants of Greece, of Rome, of Judea;—when they shed the blood of philosophers, who deserved the respect and admiration of every future age,—mingled with the blood of slaves, whose life had been as wicked as their condition was abject;—when they crucified, between thieves, one who was adorned with all the sublime excellence of heaven!

Informed of all this unjust abuse, which was perhaps wickedly, perhaps but erroneously thrown out against me; for the mistakes of party-spirit are even more unaccountable than its phrenzy; I however stifled the emotions which they excited in my agonized heart; for fear of losing the courage and constancy necessary to the effectuating of those things which I fondly hoped and wished to bring about.

The chief object of my hopes, that which appeared to me the least difficult to be accomplished, after the suppression

suppression of those commotions in the departments, which could not be prevented from arising,—was, to procure the proclamation of a general and reciprocal amnesty, amidst the grand solemnity in which the new constitution was to be accepted.—Within the sphere of my narrow influence, I urged every one to this act of justice and general restoration,—by all the motives of that love of glory which acts with full energy upon every mind, while virtue acts with its due force, but upon a highly privileged few. See, said I to the leaders of the Mountain, how glorious it would be for your party, after producing that constitution, which it was said that you meant not to produce; then to open the prison-doors to your enemies, to receive them at once into the Convention, and into your arms; to shew to all France, that the triumph of those men who have been so often represented as assassins, has not cost it a single drop of blood! This discourse, I must affirm, made some impression; but how far that impression went, I could not discern. I returned incessantly to the charge; still endeavouring to confirm and to improve whatever impression I might have made.

One day, when I was to dine at the mansion-house of the mayor, I came in so late, that the company had already sitten down at table. They were Danton, Legendre, Pache and his family, Bouchotte, and some members, I think, of the Community.—A certain silence, which seemed to have taken place among them on account of my coming in, led me to suppose, that I had been the subject of some part of their discourse.

course. I knew what was *my own order of the day*; and this led me to suspect what must have been the order of the day on my account.—Persuaded that it lay with me to renew the conversation, I soon began to speak of the constitution, then just finished; of its acceptance, of which there was no doubt; and proceeded in these words: “ The greatest benefit which
 “ can arise from this work, will not be the constitu-
 “ ting, but the tranquillizing of the Republic. When
 “ we vow to obey it, we must vow to pardon its ene-
 “ mies: At that moment will truly commence the
 “ æra of the Republic. At that moment, we must
 “ all put on a new temper of mind; we must all be-
 “ gin a new life. All sides have been accused of
 “ crimes of which there was no side guilty. But if
 “ we are to avenge ourselves, we can avenge ourselves
 “ only by crimes; those crimes will soon produce
 “ new vengeance; that vengeance other crimes; and
 “ we shall thus long continue to move round in a
 “ circle of bloodshed,—without power to recede from
 “ it. It is not merely in my own name I thus
 “ speak; it is not simply to my words that I require
 “ your assent; I speak in the name, I but echo the
 “ clear and unerring voice, of the history of man-
 “ kind.”

While I thus spoke, and with earnestness, four or five looked down upon their plates; but Legendre, on the contrary, and Danton, raising each his head and breast, and turning towards me, listened with looks expressive of a perfect intercourse of intelligence and sentiments between their minds and
 the

the mind of the speaker. Had we been then alone, I doubt not but we should have embraced. But, Danton and Legendre knew, as well as I, that the emotions of the company in general, were far from being in unison with ours; and Danton, concealing under the rough roar of his voice, the genuine tenderness of his heart, said, " Well! Garat; if you wish all this
 " to come to pass, make haste, and take all measures in your power, to procure the general acceptance of the constitution: call for money, and
 " spare not: the Republic will always have enough!"

If this be all that is requisite, answered I, depend upon me. I have my own opinion concerning this new constitution. But its acceptance appears to me to be the only means we have to save the Republic, and I pledge my life for its being accepted.

Beside me sat one, whose extraordinary attention to this conversation, did not fail to surprise me exceedingly, and who addressed me in these words, which I have, for several reasons, carefully retained in remembrance: *Citizen, let us be generous at our own expence, not at the expence of the Republic.* I declare that it was neither Pache, nor his mother, nor his daughter, nor his son-in-law, nor Bouchotte. I insist, too, that his name cannot be demanded from me, because it could not be, in any case, possible to impute to him what he thus said, as a crime.

After dinner, Legendre, whom I knew only in consequence of having accidentally met with him two or threetimes before, came up to me with confidence and kindness.

kindness. He spoke to me of Lyons, where he had been upon a mission, of what he had there seen, of what he had there done, of what he had there said. He opened his heart to me ; and this was to me a new proof, that the wishes which I had expressed at table accorded with his ;—for no man opens thus his mind to another, unless he believe that other to be of the same sentiments as he himself is.

It was of great utility to dispose the minds of some of those who had the principal influence in Paris, to this mutual forgiveness. But the principal matter was, to prepare the minds of the people of France to feel the necessity of this mutual forgiveness, and to insist upon it in the Primary Assemblies with that imperious tone of sovereign authority which must be obeyed even by the legislator, unless he become a rebel. It was this effect I desired to produce by a composition, which I addressed to the Departments of the Republic, but which I could compose only by night, because the whole day was consumed in the extensive and fatiguing business of my office.

At that instant, when the approbation of the events of the 31st of May, and the 2d of June, appeared to be general in Paris ; and when indignation against them, not yet suppressed by terror, was general throughout the Republic ; it was required of the ministers, particularly of the minister of the Internal Department, that they should address circular letters to the Departments, representing those transactions in the most favourable light, and requiring the days on

which they took place to be recorded among the fortunate days of the Republic.

Never should I have written letters to circulate such apologies. I forbade all the principal clerks in my office, to insert in its correspondence any thing having a reference to those days; and I must say, that they had all little or no need of the prohibition.

My silence was difficult to be accounted for; and I did not wish to leave it always so.

At the Committee of Public Safety, the demands upon me became every day more urgent; they became almost menacing. I still replied, *Writing at the impulse of passion, men write with great rapidity. When they write for the sake of truth, they take more time. Allow me to take my own way. I shall seize the happiest moment to come out with my address; and I hope to write things which shall be found useful to ALL.*

The uneasiness occasioned by my silence, made such progress, that Danton, who had detected my sentiments concerning the state of public affairs, and had not been unaffected by them,—that Danton, who wished not to ruin me, but still less to ruin himself,—had *denounced* my silence at one of the meetings of the Jacobin Club: *Roland, when minister, said Danton, deluged France with contra-revolutionary writings: Garat, in his ministry, takes another mode of corrupting public opinion; and will not write a word.* This language was quite in the style of the *tribune*; it was loudly applauded; and that very night, I think, the Jacobins named commissaries for an inquiry into my conduct. Next day, Danton said to me, *The devil's in*
the

the man ! I have been obliged to denounce you to the Jacobins. I replied, without asperity, I know that you have denounced me ; and I suppose, you could not avoid it.

If my silence had been blamed, I had reason to expect that my work would be blamed still more ; yet, I went on. The magnitude of the objects, and the extensive nature of the view in which I endeavoured to represent them to the Republic, necessarily extended the plan of my address. I went back to the origin of all our quarrels, in order that I might the better discern and unfold their nature and process. I distinguished and marked those speeches which had successively augmented their violence. I examined what influence had been exercised over them, and what character had been stamped upon them, by the debates in the National Assembly, in the Jacobin Club, at the Common Hall of Paris, as well as by the most popular pamphlets and newspapers. I traced, with the information of an eye-witness, the progress of those great events which had spread disorder and alarm through the Republic.—I weighed in the balance of my reason and conscience, those heavy charges which the two sides of the Convention had mutually thrown out against one another.—I dispelled, as phantoms which had been merely conjured up by mutual hatred, those accusations of royalism, which were brought against all parties by their adversaries, at a time when the Republic was not barely the passion, but the phrenzy of almost every mind among us. I opposed, as another chimera still more absurd, and more dangerous, the idea

of *federalism* ; a word taken in a sense directly contrary to that which properly belongs to it ; but which, when it expresses any thing real, describes a form of government perfectly opposite to those acts by which it had been attempted to raise up and combine all the departments of the Republic against that tyranny of which they all accused the department of Paris. I dwelt with all the earnestness and pathos of the human heart, upon the situation of those representatives of the people who were detained at Paris.—I refused for them that revolutionary tribunal, to the institution and forms of which they had all given their opposition, and against not only the competency, but the very existence of which, they had already protested.—I demanded for them, from the nation, a tribunal of judges and a jury, out of all the departments, and assembled under forms truly judiciary, far from Paris,—not at Bourdeaux, Lyons, nor Caen ; but in some town or hamlet which had taken no share in the quarrels.—Reprimanding their passions, wherever I thought such reprimands requisite ; refuting with all the delicacy due to their situation, those unjust accusations which they had brought against me ; I affirmed that their innocence was clear as the light of day ; and I resigned my office as minister, for the purpose of assuming the task of their official defender before the new tribunal ; a task which I was well qualified to discharge, in consequence of my acquaintance with the facts in question.

As I wrote, I sent my manuscript, sheet by sheet, to the national press at the Louvre.—An hundred and

twenty-eight pages were already printed.—Of these there had been thrown off six thousand copies in 8vo. and as many in 4to. There was but a sheet and a half more wanted to finish the work ; and of this, the manuscript was nearly ready.

Unluckily, it was known that I had my work in the press : it was known that this work was of considerable length : and some who took a warm interest in the matter, were curious to know, even before my work was finished, what there was in it. To me, however, they had never said any thing of the matter.

But, from that day, I found myself to be surrounded with snares. I heard around me the murmur of accusations which aimed to put a stop to my work, by putting an end to my life.

At the distance of ten or twelve leagues from Paris, there were some trifling commotions among some old devotees.—These were represented to me, as very serious.—I was told that I must immediately send a courier with letters to the administrative bodies, enjoining severe measures. The letters were written ; the courier set out. He had not gone far when he was arrested, on pretence, that when going through the suburb of St Antoine, he had cried, *I am going to the army of Jesus*. The letters sealed with the seal of the minister of the Republic were torn open, and were brought back to me in this state. Those who opened them, had not found what they expected.

It is universally known, that the minister for internal affairs has nothing to do either with the supply or inspection of the provisions for Paris. This was the
right

right and duty of the Community; which had for this end formed a *board for provisions*, at which the mayor presided.

I had, I could have—but two occasions for interference there.

I had two or three times asked some millions of money from the Convention, for this object of expenditure; and I knew that several of the deputies had blamed me for this to their own departments. I knew all that could be thought or said of such an abuse, and had myself taken notice of it when I made my request. But the same abuse had been before suffered to pass. It has been suffered since. And if there ever was a moment, when it could not without danger be suppressed, that was the moment at which I spoke.

The second occasion of my interference was, to obtain an account of the requisitions of grain made for the use of the Community of Paris, in order to give them, as it were, the sanction of the Republic.

Yet, he who had the chief care of furnishing these provisions, one Garrein, because he was, or pretended to be, at a loss, contrived with himself to throw the responsibility from off his own shoulders, upon mine.

I received a letter from Garrein, in which he thus wrote: *It must be, that the people know and decide which of us two it is, that has brought their subsistence and lives into danger.* I that instant sent a note to the mayor, to acquaint him with this very extraordinary piece of extravagance, and to inform him that I should make it known to the Convention. Ere an hour had passed,

there came in to me, the mayor, with his usual tranquillity of manner, and Garrein with a penitent and almost submissive air;—excusing himself because he had scarce time to read all the letters he was obliged to sign. They prevailed with me to let all be forgotten. To evince my readiness to forget unmerited abuse, I put into their hands, even the letter in which it was contained. Within two days, however, Garrein posted over all Paris, a red bill, printed in great letters, in which he repeated in a thousand forms the absurd charge; not forgetting to use, among others, the very words of the letter which I had returned him. The people neither read nor gave credit to Garrein. The committees of the Convention prepared to do me justice. There was then a necessity for digging some other pit to ensnare my feet.

Amid those prejudices and errors, which, with the force of a torrent, were overwhelming all the hopes of prosperity which could be conceived in the rising Republic; amidst these, had long been involved the notion, the project of a *maximum* for the price of all articles of merchandise, particularly for the price of grain. That such an idea should have been started, in one or other of those departments, in which the price of labour is scarce ever in a reasonable degree adequate to the price of bread,—this I should not have thought surprising. But that it should take its rise at Paris, where, whatever the price of grain for the time, the people, by the munificence of the nation, buy always their bread at one price, and this an excessively low one,—appeared to me perfectly unaccountable.

countable. My principles upon all these questions of public economy, were well known, there was no occasion to examine or sound them.—Besides, they who were the authors of the measure, had already taken their resolution; and it was needless for them, after this, to open a discussion upon it, as if they had desired farther information.

They, however, gave me to understand, that it was of consequence for the question of the *maximum* to be discussed among the members of some of the Constituted Authorities; and the day and the hour were fixed at the Office for Internal Affairs.

Whatever part I should have taken, there was still some blame which I could not avoid. And, as says the great Florentine master in politics, *Good hunters are they who see with so sure an eye, the innocent animal at which they aim; that, flee it to whatever side it will, yet it must fall, either by the fire of their guns, the teeth of their dogs, or opposing waters.*

Did I refuse to assist at the conference? It would then have been said, that I refused acting in the public service. Did I vote for the *maximum*? I should then have betrayed my principles, and should have sanctioned the violation of them by the weight of my suffrage and my responsibility. Did I oppose the *maximum*? I should then be denounced upon the first opportunity, to the people, as a perfidious minister who sought to accomplish a counter-revolutionary famine.

The last of these was the deepest of the pits opened to swallow me up. I saw it, but I rushed into it.

While others declared for the *maximum*, I alone opposed it, and predicted what was easily foreseen, that it would bring on all those mischiefs which actually ensued soon after from it.

There was to be, at the Jacobin Club, a more numerous meeting of the public functionaries, for the purpose of further deliberation upon the same subject. —It was hinted to me, that I should do well to be there.—But I did not consider it as my duty to yield to this second insinuation.—I had already sufficiently whetted the poignard by which I was in danger of falling; nor did I see any reason why I should strive to make its edge keener. And in fact, farther pains were not requisite in order to destroy me, even by this means alone.—A few days after this, upon an occasion of which I shall soon have to speak; an angry orator from the national *tribune*, pointing at me, and looking round upon the Assembly, said; *ask that perfidious minister, whether he did not oppose the beneficent law of the maximum which has secured bread to the people? Ask him whether this law has been forwarded from his Office?* (He, who for the sake of ornament to his speech, and of vehemence in accusation, put this question; knew that it had actually been forwarded;—had already satisfied himself of this). When they possessed so many expedients for accomplishing my ruin, while there were so few wanted; this last was always the one reserved to be employed against me. The department, Heron, and the Community, always put the question for my life or death, *Has he done all that could be done to supply Paris with grain?* A question,

tion, the logician says, is resolved when well put. The solution of this question would have cost the revolutionary tribunal no effort of reasoning.

This was therefore an excellent expedient, but not prompt enough in its operation, and before it could be made use of, my memoir to the departments might appear.—They sought therefore some means in order to dispatch me as quickly as possible. A man, whose execution of what he attempted, was rapid as the thunderbolt pursuing the flash,—undertook the task.

Collot d'Herbois was sent on a commission. He came at half after seven in the evening to the Office for Internal Affairs, to ask one of the carriages which were at the minister's disposal. My ordinary custom was, to dine between five and six; and I had that day gone, to take the only meal with which I was accustomed to refresh myself in the four and twenty hours,—in the *Rue Bourgogne*, where, among other things that were agreeable to me, it was not the smallest, that I could for some moments forget that I was minister. Collot d'Herbois found it to be very much amiss, that a minister should be at dinner after he himself had dined. He broke out into a rage, equally against me who was not present, and against Champagneux who was present. By his voice, his gestures, the grossness and extravagance of his language, he struck terror into all around him.—He went through several rooms of the office, in search of what he could nowhere find, and exciting the same terror wherever he went.

I received notice of what was passing; and went

forthwith to take my part in the scene, but could not bring it to a close. Speaking to me, Collot d'Herbois used language no less violent, perhaps a little more oratorical.—*Roland is here no longer*, said he, taking his station at the distance of three or four steps from me, for the sake of action and attitude ; *Roland is here no longer ; but his spirit is still here ; you are inspired with it.*—My God! replied I, *Roland would perhaps say, that the spirit of Collot d'Herbois had come along with me. But, wherever I am, wherever I desire to have any thing to do ; it must either be my own spirit that presides, or none at all.* The more that Collot d'Herbois gave into bursts of extravagance, so much the more steadily did I maintain the calmness and coolness of my temper.—I was even polite to him.—He threatened Champagneux : me he did not threaten ; and he did well. The man, who, in a state of social order, threatens his neighbour with any force beside that of the law ; restores, that moment, the state of nature, both for himself and him whom he threatens, as if they were still in the pimœval forests.—He promised to denounce me next day to the Convention ; and he kept his word.

I was curious to know how he would manage, in order to represent me as guilty of a crime for having gone to dinner at six o'clock in the evening.—But tho' this was at first the only crime he had to charge me with ; yet he had found out another, while he was in the office.—That particular subject of blame, which he had hopes of acquiring against me, was to be sought in my memoir to the departments. It was in search of

it,

it, he ran from one room to another, tumbling about, and looking into every thing.—Not finding it, he laid hold on another which was printed, and was then in putting up into parcels, and under covers. It consisted of a series of questions, addressed to the directories of the departments, respecting the state of agriculture, industry, and trade, in the different districts of France; respecting the climate, surface, waters, animals; respecting the general population, and the relative proportions of the number of the men, the women, the children, the young men, those of mature age, those who had attained to old age; respecting those peculiarities in physical organization, by attention to which, Paw, Poivre, and others, have been able to unfold some important particulars, concerning the mixture of the different races of mankind, and the manner in which those forms and colours, which were originally acquired in the North, have been long retained in the South.—These questions formed a plan for obtaining, in the space of a year and a half, a true account *of the present state of France*, considered in all those points of view, in which it is of consequence for the legislators and *administrators* of a country, to make themselves acquainted with it.—A plan, which, under the kingly government, had in vain occupied the attention of ministers who were men of enlarged views; and to accomplish which, even at its origin, and amid those storms which accompanied its first establishment, would have been infinitely honourable to our infant Republic.

The manner in which Collot d'Herbois availed himself

himself of these questions, in order to make me appear for a moment, criminal in the eyes of a great assembly, is truly worthy of remark, and deserves to be noted as a curious display of the manner in which the human mind acts, and is acted upon, in great assemblies.

Collot began with reading a question which was thus expressed : *Are assignats falling in value ? And how much have they fallen ?*—*Assignats falling !* cried he, almost choaked with rage,—Is it not a crime, even to suppose the thing possible ? What else can the minister intend, who puts the question, but to excite a counter-revolution ?

To diversify the tone of his invective, and the character of the impressions which he sought to produce ; to pass from austerity to pleasantry ; he then read one of the questions respecting the peculiarities of physical organization : *Are the eyes of the people, in general, blue or black ?* Laughter here burst loudly out, in every part of the house. There could be nothing more ridiculously trifling, it was said, than such a question. And because it seemed trifling, I was to be concluded guilty.

Nothing more was wanted, to enable Collot d'Herbois to complete my ruin, save one other particular which seemed at once ridiculous and immoral.—He procured a profound silence ; and then, with my questions in his hand, read as follows : *At what age do the women leave off child-bearing ? At what age do virgins become mature for the rites of marriage !* No sooner were the words—*Virgins mature for the rites of marriage !* heard, pronounced with a theatrical tone

tone and emphasis, than the Assembly voted at once that I should be taken under arrest, and brought to their bar.

Notice of this was in great haste conveyed to me. Without waiting on soldiers or municipal officers to come in search of me ; I appeared at the bar almost as soon as the decree was passed.

Danton was president. He notified the decree to me, as to a man grasped by the inexorable arm of national justice.

I appeared before an Assembly consisting of the remaining members of the Right Side, who thought they had just reason to blame me in part for their defeat, humiliation, and oppression,—and of the Mountain, who saw me accused by those chiefs who were at that moment accomplishing and confirming their triumph. I belonged to no party ;—and it was not likely, that I should in either find a defender.—I was therefore far from endeavouring to draw upon myself, the notice of those, who, shunning all concern in my danger, made as if they did not see me, and left me to that solitary desertion, which I had deserved, by the detachment of my views and conduct from all interests, except the general interests of truth, of mankind, of the Republic.

There was, however, one man, who, even then ventured to join me at the bar ; and while the rest would not even seem as if they saw me, he even spoke to me. He was a member belonging to the Right Side.

But when I obtained leave to speak, and gave an account of the somewhat extraordinary visit I had on
the

the preceding evening received from Collot d'Herbois, while I was my elf at dinner, but after he had dined :—then three of those men whose souls possess too much intrepidity, whose hearts are too little steeled against the impulses of native benignity, to suffer injustice to triumph unopposed, in their presence ; arose almost at once, and without speaking of my guilt or innocence, held up the denunciations of my accuser to all that ridicule which they deserved.

Collot d'Herbois had, however, again mounted the *tribune*, in order again to hurl upon me the thunder of his eloquence, and the force of his logic.—Alert to seize with a dreadful promptitude, all the circumstances which arose, he took notice of the paleness of my countenance, (which was occasioned by a headach), as an evident proof of my guilt. It was still exceedingly doubtful, whether I should be dismissed to the performance of my functions as minister, or to be sent into confinement with the prospect of speedy condemnation and execution. And I call the eternal truth to bear witness, that, so entire and easy was the command I then exercised over all the faculties of my soul ; that during this whole scene, I was less concerned to escape the dreadful catastrophe to which it tended, than in observing the capricious and unaccountable play of passions, intellects, and events which it exhibited.

In the words I uttered, I had taken care to say nothing of the secret and only real cause of this furious denunciation. The president, Danton, who had often spoken to me of my work, and who could be in no doubt as to what spirit I wrote it in,—Danton, of all the
the

the members of the Assembly, best knew why I was persecuted, and why guilty, without having that by which I had given offence, actually produced as matter of accusation against me. He, too, of all the Mountain, was perhaps the man whose safety would have been the most endangered by the publication of what I had written. But in making my defence, I had, of purpose, thrown out many things which were secrets solely for Danton's ear. There was a subordinate scene, which passed between the president of the Convention and the unfortunate minister at the bar. I had recollected some instances, in which Danton had obeyed those calls of conscience and humanity, which will often raise the soul above the interests, cabals, and cruelties of revolution.—And all those touches which I aimed at his heart, affected it.—He left the chair; ascended the *tribune*; addressed the Convention; declared me innocent,—declaring me, at the same time, to be *actually incapable* of ever elevating my soul to all the grandeur and energy of the revolution. The decree of arrest was revoked, and I was again set at liberty.

Before retiring from the Convention, I passed near to the President, who stopped me, and said, *Write a plain circular letter; and throw your literary work into the fire; reserve it for history.*

Three fourths at least of the Assembly must have supposed that Danton had said as much against me, as he had said for me. He thought so himself, perhaps, or at least wished to have it thought. For my part, the testimony for which I felt the most gratitude to him,

him, consisted in that solemn charge of *weakness* which he offered against me in the presence of the whole Republic. I was indeed so *weak*, as not to chuse to engage myself by any mode of approbation, tacit or expressed, in those proceedings by which the revolution had been carried on since the 31st of May. It was an authentic certificate, the President signed, by which he declared to all France, that I had not sufficient revolutionary greatness of mind to enter into those high measures. Had I in fact entered into them, had I been willing but to write and sign two pages; what enemies should I then have had to fear, what bursts of applause would there not have awaited me? This charge of weakness was brought against me, sometimes by the Right Side, sometimes by the Left, sometimes by both together, And precisely because I have heard it from all sides, do I accept it as a testimony from all; that I have had strength of mind to resist passions which every where prevailed, and which, agreeably to their wonted manner of judging, could not allow that there was any energy except in abandoning one's self to all their violence. A time will come, nor is that time far distant; when that testimony which I here record, that testimony, the only one in which both sides were unanimous; will be my best ground of claim to complete justification in the eyes of every thinking being upon earth, in the eyes of all who shall have taken no part in these contests of the passions.

Could I have still retained any of those fond opinions concerning mankind which I long had cherished; could I have still supposed, that a composition in
which

which events in which so many were interested, were estimated with the cool judgment, and with the impartiality of algebraic equations; could I have persuaded myself, that such a production would not have roused up against me, every person in the Assembly; I should have mentioned it, even before the whole National Convention: I should have proposed to them to hear it read; and whatever effects this display of the sentiments of my mind might have produced in regard to myself, in the estimation of the nation and of its representatives; I might perhaps have still enjoyed a genuine triumph, even then when it conducted me to the scaffold. But it was too certain, that such a proposition, if I had ventured to make it, would have been referred to the Committee of Public Safety. It was plain, that the only thing I could now do with my work, was—either silently to suppress it, or else to have the courage to communicate it to the Committee of Public Safety; and to try upon that committee of government, the force of truth recommended by the only artifices of which it admits the use,—the sincere desire of rendering it beneficial to ALL.

Here I paused. The work was too long for the whole Committee to hear it to an end. The Committee of Public Safety named two commissaries for this purpose,—Robespierre and St Juste. The day and hour were fixed: but Saint Juste failed to attend.

I read the whole work to Robespierre at one sitting.

We retired to a small closet adjoining to the chamber in which the Committee of Public Safety and the Executive

Executive Council then held their meetings. We had no reason to suppose, that any thing which passed between us, could be overheard by others. But those good deeds which men strive to hide, are sometimes discovered, as well as the crimes which conscious guilt would conceal. What passed at that important interview, was overheard and remembered, by a man whom I have not called upon for his testimony, but who has voluntarily offered it.

The reading was tedious ; but it spoke home to all the passions of its hearer. He had much more ado to command his temper, than to keep up his attention. Words, every moment, broke from him, which I could not but retain in my mind, because they every one expressed with wonderful force, that confidence and insolence with which a reigning party ever assume the tone, the style, and the maxims of public spirit.

In the opening of my address, I informed the Republic, that I was about to speak of the divisions in the National Convention, and of the unhappy events which those divisions had occasioned. Robespierre interrupted me : What unhappy events ? said he. As to divisions ; these are no more ; the 31st of May put an end to them.

Speaking of the 2d and 3d of September, I painted the horrors of those days in some phrases which were perhaps energetic. It is a falsehood, said he, to assert in print, that I had a share in bringing about those events. But, none but aristocrates then perished. Posterity which you invoke, far from looking with horror on the bloodshed of that day, will rather judge, that the

blood of the enemies of liberty has been too sparingly shed.

I recollected this to be almost word for word, a reply made by Sylla, in the dialogue in which Montesquieu has represented him conversing with Eucrates ; and I shuddered to think to what an use bad men can pervert the productions of genius.

Throughout my work, I still spoke of the existing parties, of the causes which had given them birth, of the spirit by which they were animated. A party, said Robespierre, supposes a co-relative. If there *be* one party, there *must* be two.—Where, among us, have you seen parties ? There never were any. There was only the Convention, and a few conspirators.

The idea, that he was only the leader of a party, hurt him exceedingly. And he was still more hurt, that I should presume to think, I could judge with truth and impartiality of men and events, because I stood aloof from party. At all passages of this nature, his features were still thrown into frequent and violent contortions.

I had used as a sort of device, an emblem borrowed from Wolff's Logic, at the head of which I had been much struck with it.—In an engraving, Wolff represents the earth, ravaged, as it almost always is, by all the passions sweeping its surface with their tempests.—Above, and in that region to which storms never rise,—from amidst the pure serene,—issues an arm, sustained by no material support. From this arm is suspended a balance, the scales of which re-

main in perfect equipoise. And on a ribbon under the balance, are written these words ; *Discernit pondera rerum.*

Why, asked Robespierre, is this arm without support?—To shew its independency of all the passions.—So much the worse : justice ought to depend on a passion for the public good :—and every citizen ought to remain attached to the body of the Republic.

One page of the work related to Robespierre himself ; or rather to one of his speeches. It was highly praised. I praised him more particularly for the engagements which he had taken upon him, to forget all personal quarrels, and to retain no resentments, but for the wrongs done to the Republic. Generous minds conceive such sentiments in the hour of triumph.—Base souls are capable of them only at the commencement of a contest of which they doubt the issue : And it was my wish, by my praises, to bind Robespierre, now when he was victorious, to abide by the promises he had made in the hour of danger.—While I read this part of my address, he held his hand over his eyes, by which I was hindered from observing what emotions might be expressed in the changes of his countenance.—There was a long passage about the Jacobins ; which was written when they were in the height of their power. It might have been taken for a piece of composition written since the 9th of Thermidor, (the æra of Robespierre's fall.) Robespierre would hardly hear it to an end.—You do not at all know the Jacobins, said he to me. It is true that I never attend their meetings : but I carefully read the
printed

printed accounts of what passes at those meetings.—Those accounts are false.—They are given by Jacobins.—The Jacobins who give them, are traitors.

When he heard me offer myself for one of the official defenders of the confined deputies, a smile of mingled malignity and ridicule appeared on his lips, and continued while the remainder of the piece was read.—They would laugh themselves, said he, should they hear or read this. They would have sent you to the scaffold, without making much ado about the matter, before this time.—It may be, they would have done so; but for me to determine what I should do to others, it is not always necessary that I should first know what they think their duty towards me. In truth, I believe, that they would have had little recourse to the use of the scaffold.—*Little* recourse to the scaffold! Most wisely conjectured!—I saw clearly that he supposed that this *little* must have included himself, and thought that it would then have been a great deal too much.

The most important part of my paper; that which was to communicate its particular spirit and character to all the rest;—that which from the pen of a minister, who had witnessed the events in question, was to produce the most powerful political effect,—was the sketch which I drew of the transactions of the 2d of June, with the judgement I passed upon them.

Robespierre listened. He heard what follows.

“ The Revolutionary committee, which was exalted in Paris above all law, wished to give the law to the legislators of the Republic. The insurrec-

" tion, after pausing for one day, renewed its opera-
 " tions with augmented fury; and the next day,
 " which was Sunday, (the 2d of June), a much more
 " considerable armed force, in which were observed
 " a number of strange soldiers unknown to the in-
 " habitants of the city, encompassed the National
 " Convention with several surrounding lines, armed
 " with gun and bayonet.—An hundred pieces of ar-
 " tillery were carried about from side to side, appa-
 " rently that they might be conveyed to the most fa-
 " vourable situations for effectual discharge. The
 " most ferocious guards who could be selected, were
 " pitched upon, by unknown authorities, to occupy
 " those posts which were the nearest to the sanctuary of
 " the legislators. Amidst these operations, which
 " had the appearance of being intended for the pu-
 " nishment of the representatives of the nation, they
 " were called upon to enact a new law. Strange
 " contradiction! which would be absolutely incom-
 " prehensible, were there not in history some other
 " examples of the same!—A law was demanded from
 " an assembly, from whom by menaces and terror all
 " freedom of judgement was taken away!—The Con-
 " vention, resolving to retire from that scene of im-
 " prisonment, had to walk through files of pikes and
 " bayonets; yet received the respectful and fraternal
 " salutations of those soldiers, who were armed to
 " force from them a particular decree. That decree
 " was passed; and it put two and thirty of the repre-
 " sentatives of the people under arrest.—Was it
 " then

“ then a law? did it express the unbiassed will of the
“ Convention?

“ I dare not so lie to my own conscience, and to
“ the Republic, as to say that it did.

“ Law is the actual or probable expression of the
“ general will.—The general will is the last act of a
“ deliberation, which has been guided by nothing but
“ ideas, reasonings, and what is thought to be pure
“ reason.

“ If it were understood that this was the will of
“ the representatives of the Republic, what need was
“ there for *insurrection*?

“ I will not affirm, for I do not believe, that those
“ who should have refused to vote, would have been
“ assassinated. No, I cannot think that the design
“ was to put them to death; but it certainly was di-
“ rected to put them in fear; and fear destroys that
“ freedom of volition, without which there can be
“ neither deliberation nor law.”

When my work, which was all in the spirit of this extract, had been read to an end, Robespierre rose up, and, with an altered voice, said; In this address you bring impeachment against the Mountain, and against the 31st of May.—Against the Mountain? Not at all; I, on the contrary, justify it completely from those weighty charges which have been laid against it. As to some of its members, and as to the 31st of May, I speak out what I think.—You fling a torch into the midst of the Republic.—It has, on the contrary, been my endeavour to throw water to extinguish the kindling flames.—It cannot be suffered.

—If the Committee of Public Safety think it dangerous that my work should appear ; the work will then be, of course, suppressed, and I shall myself give orders for the committing of both the editions to the flames.

Two days after, an order for this was given, and was obeyed.

I had fortunately in my own hands, the last proof-sheets of the octavo edition. I was sensible of the danger of preserving them ; but at the same time foresaw, that they might one day be of the highest use to me. They have been saved from every search, and I possess them still.

Gouget Deslandres, one of those citizens, who out of the number of our men of cultivated and enlightened minds, have, amidst the hurricanes of the Republic, been the most constantly devoted, not to the passions of a few members of the Right Side, but to the principles and virtues of that part of the National Representation ; Gouget Deslandres, happening to be accidentally at the door of the closet in which the above conference passed between Robespierre and me, overheard the last words of our debate, which were naturally pronounced in a higher tone of voice than the rest.

It was to him, that one of the young men employed in the office of the Committee of Public Safety, within a few days after related, that he had overheard from Robespierre, some words which respected me, and that I was *a ruined man*.

I could not be blind to the dangers to which I was exposed. But, while minister, I could not so betray

my

my trust, as not earnestly to concern myself about the danger of those representatives of the people who were in confinement. I was persuaded, that with them a great part of the Republic must be saved or destroyed.

Their danger became every day more urgent. All that I could learn, convinced me that it was determined to bring them to trial. Robespierre alone might have had the audacity, but could not have had the courage, to do this.—Collot and Billaud gave the requisite firmness to the timidity of his soul.

At that period, when I had reason for believing the thing to be under deliberation, but not to have been, as yet, brought to a decision ; a deputy of Paris, and of the Mountain, with whom I was little acquainted, but in whom I had occasionally observed sentiments of humanity even toward his enemies,—Robert—came to the office of the Minister for internal Affairs. I conversed with him concerning circumstances, and concerning the events which were expected soon to come to pass. He appeared to view them with not less horror and alarm than I.—We were both persuaded that all depended upon Robespierre ; that if he should demand blood, blood would be shed ;—that if he should not make the demand, none else would dare. With this conviction upon my mind, I was induced to make a last attempt upon that haughty and vengeful soul — I begged Robert, if possible, to obtain for me an interview with Robespierre. Robert went, that instant, and soon returned to tell me, that Robespierre would see me on that very morning.

Robespierre accordingly received me at his house :

But he was not alone ; Chabot was with him. The conversation which passed between us, would deserve to be recorded at length in the pages of history. It might throw new light upon the hidden recesses of the human heart. I shall here set down only the heads of it.

Of two very different sorts of generosity of which the human heart is capable, one has its origin in the tender affections, the other in our pride. The latter, I well knew, was the only generosity that could spring in the breast of Robespierre. I therefore set before him, in the first instance, the captivating prospect of this species of grandeur and triumph. But I instantly saw, that he himself placed his pride, his triumph, his grandeur, in crushing his enemies without mercy.

I sought to touch his heart by another key,—*his fears*. I represented, that if a beginning were once made by the slaughter of some of the deputies ; they would soon be all threatened by the same fate ; and they who sent others to the scaffold, would soon be made themselves to follow. I then perceived, that he believed the slaughter of all those of whom he was afraid to be the only means by which he could protect his own safety.

Repulsed, as if it had been by a wall of brass, on whatever side I assailed him : Will the Convention, said I, suffer them to be judged by a court which was established in opposition to all their remonstrances ?—*It is good enough for them !*—What an expression !

Chabot,—this justice I owe to his memory,—Chabot, who, during the whole conversation, continued walking

walking about, smiling on Robespierre, nay, sometimes smiling aside on me, ventured to assert and to maintain, that there ought to be a different court.—I proposed the formation of an assize out of all the departments, and that they should be sent to sit somewhere else than at Paris : Chabot thought this suggestion to be *a great and good one*.

Nor ought I to omit mentioning, that, even then, the purposes of these bad men went not farther, than to the death of the two representatives, Brissot and Gensonnè.

The associated train of events and of objects here leads me, nay, obliges me, to disregard the order of time, and to speak of another step of the same kind, which was taken in regard to another man, and in favour of the same imprisoned deputies.

After confirming themselves in the purpose of judicially assassinating two representatives of the people ; the triumphant Mountain began to talk of bringing to trial, that is to say, of putting to death, two and twenty of them.

I could not persuade myself, that, of those who since the 31st of May, retained great popularity, there was not one who had not put off every feeling of humanity.—I went to wait upon Danton. He was indisposed. I had not been two minutes with him, when I saw, that his main complaint consisted in nothing but profound grief, and the greatest consternation at what was going on. *I cannot save them*, were the first words he uttered.—And while he spoke, all his gigantic strength seemed to languish ; tears fell, in big round

round drops, down that countenance, the cast and expression of which might have been compared to those of a Tartar's.—He had, however, still some hopes in favour of Verginaud and Ducos.

Methinks I hear the enemies of Danton, and even the friends of truth, here ask, whether those for whom he wept were not victims whom he himself had dragged to the foot of the scaffold, and committed to the hands of the executioner? From the moment at which I saw that Danton's heart was tremblingly alive to the emotions of humanity, I continued to see him very often,—I saw him, above all, at that season when he could not be seen without danger. And I feel myself compelled to speak, to declare to my contemporaries, and to posterity, what I knew, and what I saw of a man whose life and death must be interesting subjects of history,—whose life might perhaps have been for ever a problem, had not that problem been solved by his death.

For three years I had heard Danton spoken of, without having seen him.—At the end of this time, I was named to succeed him in the office of Minister of Justice. Condorcet advised me to wait upon him; for he was a man who might be easily attached to virtuous principles, and who was capable of doing either a great deal of good, or a great deal of mischief. The hopes of the observing and reflecting few, at that time, marked out Danton, as the intermediate agent through whom the genius that was to organize the Republic might correspond with the passions which had given it birth.

Danton's celebrity began in the Cordelier Club, which he rendered more famous than it had before been.

The great places of the Revolution, were already pre-occupied in the system of liberty associated with a throne.—Danton, who still wished for a great place, first conceived the plan of turning France into a Republic.

There are two ways which may be taken, in order to accomplish a great political change in a state. Either the innovators produce a change of opinion, which of course changes powers and institutions; or they overthrow institutions and powers, by which a consequent change of opinion is also effected.—The first way is the longest; and is to be slowly travelled. The second is not a road, but a precipice to be leaped over; it requires but one bold leap, and but a moment of time.—It was the latter, which best suited the boldness, the sluggishness, the ardent yet indolent character of Danton.

He began therefore with disturbing and confounding every thing. When almost all were *anarchists*, with grand views, requiring for their instruments, all the passions of the people; Danton was a greater *anarchist* than any one else.

Petty successes he never contested with any one; and this was the reason why all concurred to aid him in attaining the greatest successes.

He had in him something which I cannot describe, but which drew men about him, to make themselves his instruments, and to await his orders.—He was, if the phrase

phrase may be allowed, a Great Lord of the Rabble.

When you first approached him, his figure and voice were terrible. He knew it, and was not ill pleased with the idea ; for the more fear he commanded, so much the less ill was he obliged to do.

When once Mirabeau was thoroughly corrupted, the Court then employed all their means of corruption, in order to get in the same way at Danton. It is possible that he may have received something ; it is certain that if there were a bargain, nothing had been delivered upon his part : he remained faithful to the Republicans.

After the 20th of June, every one began to make his court at the CASTLE, which was apparently rising in power. Danton prepared the events of the 10th of August ; and the CASTLE was no more.

This was the motion, this the decree, that truly created the Republic.

Those days of glory were nearly allied to the 2d and 3d of September ; and Danton has been accused as a partner in all the guilt and horrors of the latter.—I know not whether he shut his own eyes, and the eyes of justice, while the massacres were perpetrated. I have been assured, that he approved as a minister what he detested as a man. I know, that, while those bloody men with whom he had been associated by the greatest victory of liberty, cut off men who were almost all innocent and peaceful ; Danton hiding his pity under the roarings of his voice, snatched on the right-hand, and on the left, as many victims as possible from slaughter ; and that
acts

acts of his humanity at that very period were afterwards recorded as crimes against the revolution, in the act of accusation which hurried him to the scaffold.

Conducted at once to the ministry, and into the Convention, Danton too well knew the revolution and human nature, not to be aware, that to continue a minister, would be but to expose himself to certain ruin; and he resigned an executive power which placed the unfortunate persons intrusted with it, absolutely at the mercy of any one who desired to crush them.

On the other hand, what a field for glory, and for the expansion of mind, did not the Convention present to those legislators who were employed to give to a nation of five and twenty millions of men, a Republican Constitution?

Danton had never regularly studied the works of those philosophers who have, for about a century now past, deduced from the nature of man, the principles of the social art. He had looked only into his own meditations for those vast yet simple combinations which the organization of a vast empire requires. But his natural capacity, which was very great, and was as yet unoccupied, naturally excluded vague, complex, and false notions, and as naturally opened itself to receive those truths of experience, which were confirmed by satisfactory evidence.

He had that invention, that instinctive apprehension of *the great*, which constitutes genius; and that silent circumspection in which consists the majesty of reason.

Danton never wrote nor printed a discourse. He
used

used to say, *I never write*. This has been, in different ages, the case with several extraordinary men, who have passed over the earth leaving on it their words and disciples, but none of their writings.—They must no doubt have felt that they could not write in a style worthy of their characters or of their ideas.

The great models of ancient eloquence were almost as little known to him, as the views of modern philosophy. But those ardent expressions uttered amidst the bursts of passion, and by the most illustrious characters, which the literature of antiquity has preserved to us—those words which, from age to age, have been resounded in every ear,—were deeply engraven on his memory; and their forms had, without his thinking of it, become the ordinary forms of the fallies of his character, and of his passions.

His imagination, and that species of eloquence, an eloquence singularly adapted to his figure, his voice, and his stature,—were those of a demagogue. His first views of men and of things, were quick, correct, and impartial. He possessed that solid practical prudence, which experience alone can confer.

He knew hardly any thing. He did not pretend to foresee. But he opened his eyes, and beheld.

In public assemblies, he uttered some expressions which were long remembered. In private company, he was silent, and listened with interested attention when those around him talked little, with astonishment when they said a great deal.—He excited Camille,
Desmoulins

Desmoulins to speak : he endured the prattle of Fabre d' Eglantine.

Such was the man who was almost adored by his friends, and whom his enemies ought to have treated with that delicacy and forbearance which the interests of the Republic demanded.

But his enemies, to whom he was of all men the most formidable, ever believed him to be the most dangerous of men to the Republic. All the faults of his party were attributed to him, because he did not prevent them : his power was represented as enormous, of purpose to defame and to ruin him.—Marat was said to be but a ribbald and madman ; Robespierre but an oratorical dictator ; and because Danton alone had talents fitted to accomplish a grand project of ambition, he was supposed to be continually busied about such a project.

Danton saw his safety endangered by the fears which he commanded ; and could not but use means for his defence.

At the very time when the Right Side had the majority, he had loudly called for a government, and this not more from fear of the mischief which his enemies might do to him and his party, than of that mischief which his party and he might do to their enemies. If his friends and he might be but safe, it appeared to him a matter of indifference, whether the passions of all should be suppressed by the public force, or should be sacrificed by the prudence of the leaders of the parties.

He believed, he saw—himself to be always menaced ;
and

it actually was so. To save himself and his friends, therefore, he overleaped all the barriers, he crossed all the boundaries of social order and virtue. He sought for himself an asylum and a defence in detestable measures, because those were, in the nature of things, the only measures in which his party could save him. The leader of a democratical insurrection, he urged it to every excess, he inflamed its delirium, and all its frantic passions.—By him were demanded the Revolutionary Tribunal, the Revolutionary Army, the Revolutionary Committees, the 40 sols of daily pay to the members of the Sections. He struck on all sides with his trident ; and on all sides furious tempests arose. For an instant, he appeared at the Committee of Public Safety ; and the 31st of May, and the 2d of June, were the consequences. He was the author of those two days. Others had the will to bring them about : he alone had the power : all the party willingly gave their concurrence or connivance.

Hardly had he seen his enemies removed from before him, when he divested himself of his power ; and turned all his cares to save those who unfortunately were already lost. They had been given up to Robespierre and Billaud. Billaud and Robespierre eagerly grasped at the government, when the season of combat was over, and nothing remained but to rear and to crowd the scaffolds.

Observe from that moment, the train of Danton's conduct in the National Convention : you will see him busied in marking out for himself an oblique path, in which he might seek at once his own safety

and

and the safety of the enemies over whom he had gained a victory that gave him more sorrow than joy.—He uttered cries for vengeance by which the vaulted roof of the sanctuary of the laws was shaken, yet at the same time suggested measures by which the cruelties of vengeance might be averted.—All the extravagance and fury of the demagogue were but feigned.—Love of order, of justice, of humanity, was the sentiment which prevailed in his heart. He affected a barbarity of soul, in order to retain his popularity; and he was anxious to preserve his popularity, that he might be able to bring back the people to a due respect for the laws, and for the lives of their fellows:

When the fate destined to the two and thirty appeared to be inevitable; Danton heard, so to speak, his own death-warrant in theirs. All the strength of this triumphant champion of democracy, sank to feebleness, oppressed by the sense of that democracy's disorders and crimes.—He could no longer talk of aught but the country. He felt a suffocation at his heart.—He needed to retire from the presence of men, in order to respire freely.—At Arcis-sur-Aube, the aspect of nature, while it calmed the anxieties of his breast, inspired him with generous and magnanimous resolutions—In the silence of the country and of retreat, he conceived the design of a new and benevolent *conspiracy*.

All his friends entered into it.

I was not his friend, and was so diligently watched, that none could see me frequently without incurring
Q
suspicion.

suspicion. But all well knew, that I would be a friend to such a conspiracy, and would further it as much as might be in my power.

About this period, I had several conversations with Danton, in which I learned to give full confidence to all those sentiments of virtue, of which I had before suspected the existence in his heart. He often spoke to me in a tone of candour and of despair, of the quarrels in the Convention, of the errors of others, of his own, and of the unfortunate events which they had occasioned.—*Twenty times*, said he to me one day, *did I make them offers of peace; they refused to believe me; that they might still remain at liberty to destroy me: they forced us to take refuge in the arms of sansculottism, which has destroyed them, which will destroy us all, which will at last destroy itself.*

The design and plan of Danton's conspiracy, although carefully concealed, were however both very evident.

Its *design* was to restore for the benefit of all, the reign of justice and of the laws, and to extend clemency to his enemies: to recall into the Convention, those of its members who had been expelled from it, reciprocally granting to them, and requiring from them, a general amnesty; to subject to the most thorough examination of the representatives of France, of the whole nation, of all Europe, that constitution of 1793, which had been framed by five or six young persons in the space of five or six days, but which ought to have been the masterpiece of the best efforts of human genius, since it was to be the first model upon earth,

earth, of a democracy of five and twenty millions of men ; to offer peace to the powers of Europe, yet still continue to defeat them ; to raise commerce and industry up from their ruins, by giving them unlimited liberty ; art and science from their state of shattered decline, by holding out to them magnificent encouragements ; to annihilate all the barriers dividing department from department ; and put an end to those inquisitions which looked upon cards, and into portfolios, for proofs of a civism which can have no existence except in souls which are exempted from all such inquisition ; to regard as the only cards of security to the Republic,—good laws, a good government, our armies, and our victories.

The *measures* by which Danton proposed to carry his conspiracy into execution, were,—to prepare the minds of men for such a change, by means of such papers as those of Camille Desmoulins ;—to open a communication and a mutual understanding between the Left Side of the Convention, and the remaining members of the Right Side ;—to put an end to that division which had laid them both at the mercy of tyrannical committees ;—to regard none but Collot, St Just, and Billaud, as irrecoverably attached to the exterminating system ;—to try to detach Barrere from them by addressing the humanity in his heart ;—Robespierre, by applying to his pride, and his passion for the general liberty ;—still to augment the power of the Committee of Public Safety, because ambition, when divested of private views, could not be too strongly armed to accomplish the public welfare,—and because,

should it, on the contrary, continue to employ new powers still in the perpetration of new crimes, its authority becoming daily more odious, would proceed from crime to crime, with that insolence and effrontery, which are always the ultimate excesses, and the termination of tyranny ;—in short, to accomplish either by gradual movements, or by some impetuous unexpected effort, a total or partial renovation of the two Committees; and by a fortunate irruption, to introduce into the government, those grand, generous, and truly patriotic views, with which the conspiracy had been conceived.

Such is all that I could see or know of a conspiracy which brought so many citizens to the scaffold.—If in the most intimate communications between man and man, there be means for distinguishing sincerity from imposture, exalted purposes and views from those which are low, narrow, and personal; the sole ambition of Danton at this period was, by accomplishing a grand and lasting good to mankind, to make amends for those terrible but transient mischiefs which he had occasioned to France ;—to extinguish by a democracy organized with profound wisdom, all the delirium and disasters of *fansculottism*;—to make the Revolution expire under a Republican government, sufficiently powerful and brilliant to establish an eternal alliance between order and liberty ;—to secure the happiness of his country ;—to give peace to Europe ;—to return then to Arcis-sur-Aube, and grow old in indolent retirement, with his children around him, and cultivating his farm.

To this grandeur of sentiment and views, had the
foul

soul of Danton been raised by that same conspiracy which animated the genius of Camille Desmoulins with all Tacitus's profundity and elevation of thought. Those who shall be surpris'd at it, will by their surprise declare, that they know not what effects can be produced on a soul that has not yet ceased to be susceptible of the tender affections of nature—by those reproaches of conscience which urge it to embrace virtue as an altar at which every crime may be expiated; that they know not how much the views of virtue can do, to create, or to exalt human genius.—Danton dying for the cause of humanity, was seen to turn his looks towards that heaven which he was truly worthy to behold. Whatever might be his faults, virtue must, throughout every future age, bear witness for him in respect to two things :—he overturned the throne; and he perished on the scaffold for having wished to stop that effusion of human blood which flowed in torrents by the hands of the executioner, and upon the very foundations of the Republic.

All my hopes of a general reconciliation were lost before the acceptance of the Constitutional-act, which had been marked as the æra of a renovation of things and of men. On that same day on which there should have been nought but emblems of peace and love, exposed to the public eye, on which nought should have waved in the air, but signals expressing, and invoking universal justice and charity, on which the olive-branch should have graced the hands of all the envoys from the Primary Assemblies, and of all the representatives of the nation :—On that very day had I seen the triumphal

procession of the Republic led up by men who ought never to have figured themselves elsewhere, than at the solemnities of cannibals ; I had seen the tabernacle of the New Testament encompassed by engines of death, and by homicidal priests ; I had seen all that was the most prostitute of Parisian debauch, riding in the car, and under the protection of the cannons of victory, in representation of virtuous and republican mothers. In that tumultuous concourse which my sick and sorrowing soul, could attend but on one side and at a distance ; and of which the confusion so well expressed the disorder of all the passions,—I could distinguish that the cries which were raised, gave no expressions of joy, save when they expressed also the furies of vengeance. I wept for the Republic ; and henceforth thought only of resigning an office which I could not without a crime retain, since I could no longer indulge any of those hopes with which I had continued to hold it.

I could not but know, nor could I help reflecting, that such a step at the present moment, must be attended with danger. I had long since learned from Seneca, *that we condemn those from whom we separate*. One of the members of the Committee of Public Safety, who was more certain that he should always wish for my safety, than that he should never vote for my death, said to me, *You throw away your buckler*. The Committee of Public Safety, whose grand character was, that they solemnly adopted, as laws and as maxims of conduct, what the most audacious of ancient tyrants never practised without hiding its odiousness

ness in the recesses of their policy,—the Committee of Public Safety had declared all to be *suspicious*, that is to say, *guilty* persons, who should resign their employments.—I gave in my resignation, and retired to await my fate, without attempting to make my escape, or even seeking to leave Paris.

Hardly had I withdrawn myself from the Executive Council, when a deputation of the Jacobins, demanded of the Committee of Public Safety, that I should be put under arrest. Some days after, there arose, or was raised, a disturbance among the workmen of the quarries of Mont-Martre and Mont-Rouge, who came to demand from the Community, at once bread and the imprisonment of several citizens. One of their orators put my name among the names of the persons proscribed; and Chaumette, when he heard it, cried, *He goes, to be sure!* While thus threatened on all hands, such was the indifference inspired by contempt, with which I regarded them all, that, I swear, I never even thought of looking over my papers. All my precautions of this sort were confined to the burning of some billets out of my letter-case, most of which had been written by Biron and by the unfortunate son of the ill-fated Custine.

About the 15th or 16th of September, Garat, formerly cashier to the National Treasury, arrived from that part of the country which was his and my common place of nativity. He presented himself (of his own free will) at the Section of Mont-Blanc, and was immediately put under arrest. In his port-folio was found a letter addressed to me. It was opened. It

was indeed from a nun, one of my sisters. But that nun is an angel. Two hours after midnight, the Revolutionary Committee of Mont-Blanc, with an escort of fusileers, entered my apartment at the Section of Bonnet-Rouge. They seized about half a dozen of my books, sealed up the rest of my papers, and signified to me that I was put under arrest, and must immediately repair to the Section of Mont-Blanc. Next day, my nephew, and another person who came to see me, were also arrested and detained in the same prison. For five days and five nights, they continued to read my papers, one by one, as they found them in the letter-cases; and during this investigation, the members of the Revolutionary Committee went from time to time to the office of the minister for war, to obtain information and assistance from Mazuel, Audouin, and Vincent.—In order to the interrogation of an ex-minister, there was a necessity for the assistance of whatever was the most perfect in a Revolutionary Committee. For this sole purpose, came every evening, a man who was a member of the Revolutionary Tribunal. The Committee was the terror of all the world: but this man was the terror of the Committee itself: I have forgotten his name. The first time I appeared before this magistrate, one of his colleagues of the Committee, whispered me in the ear; *You are going to be examined by the greatest scoundrel on earth.* I might have before suspected that most certainly the honestest man in the world, would not be chosen for such an office. But to do the man justice; he might be a scoundrel; but he was no fool. It was impossible

to lift a person with more dexterity than he discovered, in respect to the actions of one's life, in order to convert the simplest and most innocent circumstances into those crimes which the justice of the day summarily punished, without insisting upon rigorous proofs of their reality. After all their inquiries and investigations, the Section sent me before the police of the municipality.

Would not most people think, that I must have been overjoyed at being sent thither ! I was going to appear before Pache, with whom many people have supposed me an accomplice !

I found my supposed accomplice somewhat cold and serious, when I was produced before him. The first words he uttered, upon seeing one of his late colleagues of the Executive Power dragged before him, were altogether judicial and relative to the police ; *We are not competent for this affair.* He held in his hand the *Law*, and was himself the *Prophets*. I knew enough, not to dispute the incompetence which he alleged. Every one washed his hands of the affair. I was impatient to know what *sanhedrim* must at last decide my fate. I was then carried before the Committee of the Convention, for General Security.

From that Committee, had not yet been banished two members who were deservedly suspected of impartiality and humanity. They were so intrepid as to plead my cause ; and I obtained a wonderful favour. I had a soldier assigned me as a spy and guard ; and him I retained for nearly four months.

In this narrative I cannot take leave of the Section
of

of Mont-Blanc, without acquitting myself toward two of its members, by making grateful mention of an high testimony of their esteem which they were pleased to give me. The fact is perhaps so singular, as to deserve a place among the anecdotes of that period, in which virtue was often forced to seek its safety in accepting the functions, and putting on the guise of guilt. About an hour after my arrival at the hall of the Section of Mont-Blanc, all the other members of the Committee were gone, none but those two remained.—I remarked them first looking upon each other, and then with an air of concern upon me; the concern they shewed, as may be supposed, did not attract my entire confidence. One of them had been among the number that arrested me; and till this moment I had not at all distinguished him from the rest. *Well, Citizen Garat,* said he now to me, *when, think you, will all this end?* —What? all this?—Nay, the state of things in which we at present live!—I was in no haste to answer; I looked more than I spoke.—You may speak with confidence, said they: the life we lead is hell: we are the most wretched of men: our only consolation is that of weeping together, (and they both wept before me): should we be observed, here are three or four who would immediately have us imprisoned: we are watched, and not a word can we say in favour of any one without being blamed for it as a crime. Oh! my God! when will all this come to an end!—I could no longer doubt the sincerity of their concern and sorrow: and I endeavoured to comfort them with hopes which I did not myself entertain, in order to raise their de-
jected

jected souls, and to give them that courage which they needed, in order to do some good in the horrible ministration in which they were engaged.—Worthy men ! permit me to mention your names. I believe the reign of justice to be now so fully established, that your names may now be communicated to public esteem, without being, in consequence of this, liable to be included in the lists of proscription. One was *Bourret*, apothecary in the street of Mont-Blanc : the other was *Ptolomee*.—When my soldier was withdrawn, I seemed to be more at liberty ; but my death was from that moment determined upon. From that moment, those members of the General Council of the Community who possessed the greatest credit, went about repeating every where, that nine and twenty articles of accusation were prepared to bring me before the Criminal Court. From that moment, Heron, who is known to have been well-informed, affirmed that my affair was to be dispatched along with that of the SUPPLIES FOR SUBSISTENCE. After that, it was, in a full meeting of the General Council of the department, that Montmoro denounced me, as a counter-revolutionist, more perverse than all the Girondines together ; and the members of that same department incessantly urged the Committee of General Security, to put me under arrest, and deliver me over to the Criminal Court. It was after that moment, that upon a suitable occasion, and following a natural analogy ; it was resolved to request me to get into the carriage destined for the 11th of Thermidor, to three or four ex-ministers who
were

were as guilty as I, and in the same manner, with five or six ex-generals.

After the 9th, the safety of others seemed to be secure. But Billaud would not allow mine to be so; and it is not yet forgotten that he did not suppose the revolution of the 9th of *Thermidor* to have impaired either his own power or that of Fonquier-Thinville.—Some of the new members who had been received into the Committee, had an idea of making me to be named a Commissary of Public Instructions. If you speak of that man, said Billaud, I shall speak of him to the Convention.—The influence of terror no longer regulated our laws, but it prevailed in men's minds. Those by whom I had been proposed, were afraid for me, and perhaps for themselves.

Thus did I live for more than the space of a year.

I could receive no consolation for those ills which were poured out upon all quarters of the Republic; and which were of such a nature, that no end of them was to be hoped from aught but their continual increase, which was fast conducting all to despair.

As to my personal dangers and misfortunes, I received under them consolations of another nature. It was a satisfaction to me to learn, that those men who had blindly imputed their misfortunes to me, had however abjured that injustice, since they had seen me prefer to the triumph of their enemies, all the persecutions, and all those daily perils of the scaffold, to which I was exposed.—I had never had any error of this nature to obviate in the apprehension of either Ducos or Condorcet. When Condorcet was
obliged

obliged to look out for a hiding-place, I had made him an offer of one with me, even in the house which I occupied, as minister for Internal Affairs ; and I could not have supposed it possible for either the house or the minister to be ever better employed.—This violation of a decree, would have been, in my estimation, the sacred fulfilment of the laws.—Several months after, when that philosopher, the pride of the national representation, was forced to leave the secret recess in which a soul worthy of his own, had concealed him from all that multitude of spies and officers, whose eyes and ears were every where ; I had it proposed to him to repair to a house which I possess at the distance of ten leagues from Paris, and at which all would have been previously arranged for his reception.—The distance of the place, and the difficulty of passing from one department to another, without a passport, rendered this plan too dangerous to be adopted ; I made it my endeavour to procure him another place of retreat, nearer to that which he had been forced to abandon ; and it was while we were concerting measures for this, that my hapless friend fell almost into the hands of those who put to death, all that had not, themselves, the courage to anticipate the fatal stroke.

Till the very last moments of Ducos's life, I continued to correspond with him by means of the wife of General La Marliere, who was in waiting upon her husband in the prison. Ducos and Fonfrede, when they went out to the scaffold, sent to tell me, that they should die with warm esteem and friendship for me ; and recommending their memory to me, if I should

be permitted to live.—Ah! doubtless, their memory is sure to be honoured and cherished by all upon earth, who possess any sentiments of humanity or justice.—But that sacred bequest will find none ready to execute it with more earnest piety and devotion than I.

Those who strove to defame such pure victims before slaughtering them, did not call for my testimony in the infamous pretence of trial and condemnation to which they subjected them.—And they themselves were so generous, as not to cite a witness, whose first words of evidence would have brought him into the same condition with themselves.

Claviere, who remembered much more my respect for truth, and for misfortune, than the quarrels which had passed between us; having written for his defence, a memoir from which he believed that he might still derive some advantage; sent his brother to communicate it to me. And his brother will still testify how it was received by me, and will declare whether he found my door and my heart shut against him by that terror which held all others at a distance.

When Lebrun appeared at the bar, his first cry was upon my name; his last hopes were in procuring me to be heard in his favour, by his judges.—I hastened thither, sick as I was, and attended by the soldier to whose inspection I had been subjected.—Scarcely had I entered the hall, where all the witnesses were assembled, and through which were constantly passing, a number of unfortunate persons, of whom some were going to receive sentence of death, some having already

ready

ready received it, were departing to the scaffold; when I was surrounded by a crowd of other witnesses who knew me better than I knew them: they almost all pressed me to retire, and not to expose myself to certain destruction, while I could not be able to save Lebrun.—I felt the force of what they urged: and for a moment, I must confess that nature, which springs back from danger, wherever she is not supported by courage and virtue,—for a moment, nature deliberated within me, whether I should remain to give my evidence before the tygers, or should rather flee a cavern reeking with the blood of so many victims. I determined, however, to remain.—I remained in the morning, till the Court rose: in the evening, I again remained, till the jury, without hearing a single witness for Lebrun, had declared themselves to be in conscience satisfied of his guilt.

I was sure, that, by staying, I should harm myself, and do no good to Lebrun. But when men can do nothing to save one another, the duty of soothing a sufferer, but with a single effusion of tender consolation, becomes as sacred, as that of mutually defending one another's lives. It was this principle which made me remain fixed, as it were, within the cavern of Polyphemus, although I might not but expect, in so doing, that it would soon be my turn to be devoured.

To make me retain an attachment to life, amid so many horrors, it was necessary, that I should reflect that my safety might be of use to a nation, which was then treated by some of its representatives, worse than ever it had been treated by its despots.—That idea
- still

still met me in the design I had conceived, of leaving on my tomb, the history of what I had seen in the course of the revolution.—That it might not be stifled by those scenes of bloodshed which were constantly passing before my eyes; I found it necessary to make an effort to save from the executioners, yet some of those victims which were daily falling by their hands; and I cannot reproach myself as having suffered a single occasion to escape me without raising the cry of humanity amid the savages about me.

Once at least, I owed to accident, and to a meeting the most fortuitous, the happiness of saving the life of an Englishman who was going to be put to death, as a spy of Pitt's; but who had been obliged to flee from England, in consequence of having professed some of those principles of universal generosity which are held every where as crimes, unless they be slighted and ridiculed as idle dreams. Alas! that excellent man, whose name I am obliged to conceal, knows not, that to me he owes his life, nor does he know, that a letter which he wrote to me from Basle, afforded occasion for some impostors to accuse me of holding a correspondence with the enemies of the Republic. When all the passions are let loose, it is then that all events become in some manner fortuitous; and fortune and chance seem to become, in respect to both good and evil, blind divinities directing the destinies of mankind.

Such has been my conduct. I have here given a full detail of it. Self-evident truths need not other demonstration.

As to those of my enemies, who would make their own hatred the rule for judging of me,—not the faults which I may have committed; the more completely I vindicate myself, so much the more must such men be offended against me. But it is not for them I write.

While some have endeavoured to terrify me by their anger, others have assumed an air of encouraging me, and have threatened me with their clemency.

What sort of a language was that for republicans, which all sides have used!

Have we then changed our system, in order to establish favour or revenge in the room of justice? Who knows not, that if there be men against whom revenge, would be injustice; there are also men to whom favour cannot be shewn? Who knows not, that a republic is undone, when it accepts the services of talents by which it has been betrayed, when it pardons that which corrupts, for the sake of that which is useful to—it? That a despot, whose power has been confirmed, while his subjects have been amused, should suffer a player on the flute or harp, to survive his crimes,—this I can account for; in such a condition of civil life, all is formed for amusements or for crimes; and even the acts of justice are but crimes and amusements. But, I either possess no sort of talent that can be of use to a republic; or else it is the talent of sometimes unravelling the clue of human opinions, and of detecting where lies error, and discerning what is the truth,—the talent of sometimes painting virtue in her native charms, so as to enable her to efface the illusions of passion. If then, he who

R

possesses

possesses talents of this species, and sees truth more clearly than others, shall, nevertheless, stifle this truth under an accumulation of artful falsehoods; if, while he presents virtue to the love, and even to the adoration of mankind, he yet could become the accomplice of a few ruffians; if, while minister of the Republic, he could make himself the minister of a knot of conspirators; why talk to him of indulgence and grace? He has erred, without being deceived: He has violated every duty, with the full knowledge of its sacred obligation: He can offer no excuse, and deserves to meet no mercy. Let the wretch perish. It will be clemency to bid death snatch him from infamy.

How could it be supposed, that if he were saved solely on account of his talents, those talents could be preserved in their vigour, and could still be made useful? What ascendancy could truth maintain, from the lips, or from the pen, of a man who should have obtained a pardon for the crime of betraying his country? What could he prove by his homage to virtue, except that we may honour virtue in our expressions, yet betray her by our actions? Who knows not, how much the sincerity of Seneca, that eloquent painter of virtue, has been brought into suspicion, by the difficulty of reconciling his sentiments to his manners, his principles to his habits of life,—and how much this has contributed to cloud with doubt the very existence of virtue herself? By degrading a philosopher, the infamous Suilius, and his infamous echoes, have greatly degraded philosophy itself: and this, indeed, was perhaps their principal aim, and dearest hope.

Trust

Trust me, it were vain to spare the life of a guilty philosopher, for the sake of his talents ; his talents would perish while he received the degrading favour ; his talents would be extinguished under the shame with which he would receive your clemency ; his life, his person, on which you set no value, would be the only thing left you, of what he was.

As to myself, let either your errors, which cannot for ever remain with you, do me a very complete, a very formal injustice ; or let your justice crown me with honour ! With me you have but the choice of two parts to take. If you persist to insult me with your indulgence, I, to exalt my soul, which you strive to abase, shall treat your indulgence as your injustice : ready to sink under the mortification of your pardon ; I shall however recover my vigour, and respire at ease, and with pride, under that oppression of which you shall make yourselves guilty. Then, if I have in truth any talents, I shall be sure to find and to exert all their energy.

This mode of forgiving me, therefore, would be but a way of destroying me ; and would prove very unsuccessful.

One of those who had solemnly vowed to sacrifice even their most just resentments, happened to drop an expression, in which, at least, his passion appeared without disguise.—He circulated one of those libels, in which I have been so unworthily, so basely, defamed. *All this is false*, said some one to him : *What of that*, answered he, *provided it ruin him* ? This was a frank confession : and it is clear, that if he can

ruin me, that representative of the people little cares, whether it be by truth or falsehood.—I, for my part, do not swear to forego a vengeance which must be perfectly lawful: But I shall conceal his name; and this I think sufficiently generous.

I should only wish, that he would take the pains to inform me by what means he would chuse to ruin me, and when he would think his purpose fully accomplished.—In order to the gratification of his passion, it would be requisite that he and I should form the same judgement of what his kind cares might bring upon me.—For if in a situation in which he should think me undone; I, on the other hand, should believe myself to be saved; then would he be mightily mistaken, and his hatred would then be somewhat disappointed.

Does he hope to ruin me by making me lose the place which I at present occupy? Then I give him joy; I am no longer a commissary for public instruction: I, in these very words, resign to the Committee for Public Instruction, and to the Convention, the title and the functions with which they intrusted me. I am no longer any thing. Does he now think me ruined? He must think so: I am supposed to have a great attachment to places, and to the emoluments of places. The writers of journals, pamphlets, and handbills, all excellent citizens, as their names, and the titles of their writings prove, have asserted in print, that I engross three or four places together; and of emolument, they have assigned me much more than even of places. The doubt was only, whether my income were

were annually fifty thousand livres, or an hundred thousand. Thus, the golden table of Seneca is well furnished out for me; and it only remains for me, as it should seem, to write on it, a treatise, and an eulogy upon poverty.

I confess, I was content with my wealth; I asked neither gods nor men for additional fortune.—But it is proper that the world know the exact amount of those emoluments which can hardly be counted.—As commissary of public instruction, I must have had the known salary of the other commissaries, which is twelve thousand livres a-year. If any man on earth, cashier, banker, treasurer, or other person, can affirm, that, on any pretext whatsoever, he has paid me a farthing more; let him stand forth, and speak as president of this discussion. My numerous emoluments are therefore all reduced to one salary. And if it be still maintained that I have had a number; we must then come to discuss the question which has been sometimes before discussed by metaphysical geometers, whether ONE be, or be not, a number, I am not much of a metaphysician; of a geometer, much less. I leave the question to be handled by the learned authors of the pamphlets. The truth cannot possibly elude the grasp of men who search for it with such earnestness, and such discernment.

In the Republic, the mode seems to be established, of giving an account of our fortunes, past, present, and to come. I do not dislike this mode, if it continue in fashion. For, if a rogue be dextrous enough to conceal what he has taken; other rogues have suf-

ficient penetration to detect what he conceals. Rogues are excellent checks upon one another. As to honest men, they will set examples which will sometimes perhaps be followed. Much is therefore to be gained by this mode ; and I accede to it.

I am the son of Biscayan physician, who practised medicine in both Spain and France. My Father, who was esteemed in both kingdoms a very skilful physician, was, however, not so skilful as to raise the smallest fortune in either the one or the other.—He died without having diminished, and, I believe, without having augmented his slender patrimony. He was too honest a man to contract debts, and too generous, too disinterested, to leave wealth behind him.

I enjoyed, at Bourdeaux, the title of *Avocat* ; and I was more than five and twenty years of age, before I was laid under any necessity of reflecting that, I had of my own no means for the subsistence of my life, and must therefore labour to acquire a livelihood.—I lived with a brother who spared me such cares. With a Virgil ever in one pocket, and a Locke or Montesquieu in the other, I was accustomed to roam about amidst rural scenery, gay with riches and beauty.—I forgot that I was upon earth, because Senon, Florac, and Ustarits, were scenes like Elysium.—I reflected not that I was among men, because my constant conversation was with those geniuses who have been called children of the gods. But it became necessary, that I should take my part for life. The world will judge, whether I chose the road that leads to fortune.

I came to Paris, to write articles for the *Mercure*, and discourses for the *Academy*.

Finding every where friends and felicity, my fatal star condemned me still to forget that I was born poor; and poor I still remained.

All was of necessity to change with the French revolution, which must change the whole world.—In the year 1789, I began to conceive, that some ideas, which till then had not otherwise engaged my mind, than as *ideal good*, might be realized upon earth: I hoped that delightful reveries might become useful thoughts; and that, after making me happy, they might enter into combination with those other views which were to constitute the happiness of the human race. But I knew, and did not forget, amid these flattering hopes, how difficult it is to discover important general truths; how difficult to demonstrate them to others, after you have yourself discovered them; how exceedingly difficult, to represent known and demonstrable truths, with such clearness and precision, as may relieve men from the necessity of long attention; and with such interesting graces as may compensate for the transient attention they are required to give.—I was fully aware, how much the task I had undertaken, how much,—to speak out my sentiments,—how much the commission I had received from nature, was subjected to difficulties, which must render it unspeakably arduous to be fulfilled; what entire leisure and independence it required.—To procure for myself those conveniences of fortune which could alone bestow the requisite leisure and independence,

I condemned myself for nearly three years to a species of labour which counteracted alike, and in the highest degree, all my evil habits and all my good qualities. I undertook the compilation of the article of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY in the *Paris Journal*. The compensation for that labour, most of which I received not till it was at an end, is the chief, nay THE ONLY, fortune I have yet acquired. It amounted nearly to 32,000 livres.

With this money I bought a house and garden, at ten leagues distance from Paris, at Auvernau, a place that attracted my choice, because I found there many rocks, and but few men.

Experience is well known, or is at least said, to enlighten mankind. Experience soon taught me, that it is only in the *Georgics of Virgil*, or in the *Seasons of Thomson*, that a garden will nourish its possessor. If the *Paris Journal* had afforded me a few thousands of livres more; there were some fields contiguous to my garden, which were both good and not too dear, and might have been sufficient to attach me as a farmer to the spot. In conversation, I sometimes hinted my regret, that I should be so unable to purchase them. The gale of friendship conveyed my wishes to the ear of a man of letters, and his brother, to whom I was entirely unknown, (*Legrand*, author of the *Fabliaux*, and of an excellent work, entitled *Voyage en Auvergne*): and they together agreed to make up, and to lend me the sum of six and twenty thousand livres, with which I bought the lands I was so desirous to possess.

Such

Such is the balance of my pecuniary accounts : Such has been the train of my life, active and passive.

If I be found to possess aught besides, let me be deprived of it ; and let there be nought left me but the infamy and the punishments due to those who embezzle the treasure of the Republic.

As to my future employments, I have among my papers A HISTORY OF ANTIQUITY, which is considerably advanced, with some other works, for which I have already treated with certain publishers.—I know not yet what copy-money they may bring me. But all my transactions respecting my works, shall be public.—Having been once Minister, I joyfully consent to make myself accountable for my whole life to the Republic.

It has been said, that all ages have their playthings : and so also have all characters.—A man somewhat dazzled with the glare of riches, may be apt to think himself undone, when he loses those posts which enabled him to give places to his friends, to attach creatures to his own interests and to those of his family, to fix his ambition upon foundations more solid and more extensive.—But to make me feel this loss, it would have been first requisite that I should have known this enjoyment. When *Minister of Justice*, I named successors, only to those places which I found vacant ; and those, as far as I can recollect, were but two. In the department of the *Minister for Internal Affairs*, all the places had been previously filled up by the friends of Roland : I not only retained them all, but even

even defended them against the triumphant and proscribing party which enjoined me to look out for other assistants. I knew how little this firmness would avail me; and that it would be noticed by those only whom it must offend. But provided my own conscience might bear testimony to the good I did; I was indifferent as to the ostentatious publication of the particulars of my conduct, on the walls and rubric-posts of all Paris.—*The Commission for Public Instruction*, in the condition in which I found it, wanted many reforms, which were indispensibly necessary.—Except one man, with whom I had ties of connection, d'Efrenaudes, a man of an excellent heart and understanding; the choice of all the rest has been indeed *adopted* by me, but *made* by reputation, and by the destination of public opinion. And when even the trivial merit of *adoption* from public opinion was denied to Guinguenè and me; we held our peace, satisfied that the benefits of our administration could not be taken away.

As to my family: I have been often blamed for doing nothing for them, never for doing too much: One of my nephews was for ten months detained in rigorous confinement: nor could I save him from ten minutes of it.—Denounced by a bad singer; he suffered a year's imprisonment for trilling through a French throat, the sweetest songs and most passionate accents of Italian melody; and for being in music an *ultra-revolutionary*. I had two nephews in the armies of the Republic, while I was Minister; one upon the Pyrennees,

Pyrennees, the other on the Rhine. The latter has served in every campaign of the war. While opening the hostile ranks with the bayonet, he and his companions have often sung republican and martial strains, of which he was the author : yet this young, and not crooked, Tyrtæus has remained always a common soldier. Since I entered upon the offices of the administration, I have had another of my nephews constantly with me, or near me.—Fonfrede was his relation ; Ducos his bosom-friend ; all the deputies from the Gironde were his friends.—All his friends, except myself, took an interest in his advancement. He was in fact advanced in the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to a place affording nearly a thousand crowns of income ; but the only place he had from me, was that of Secretary to the *Section*, a very inferior place in the commission, at the head of which I was, and of which all the places were at my disposal.—My hopes for him, are, that he will never hold a place in the Republic, but will one day take his station among those men, whose talents, writings, and virtues, serve the interests, and exalt the honours of humanity.

Could my enemies think to ruin me, by making me lose places which they perhaps supposed me to regard as the ladders to that ambition for glory, which is the last passion of great minds? There have no doubt been unhappy times, when a Minister, who could do much with a despot, who could do all, might lawfully conceive the ambitious plan of immortalizing his name in a great empire, of embracing in his thoughts all the wants, and in his wishes all the wishes of a people,

people, of supplying them, and of rendering them for ever respectable, by laws which even the caprices of despotism should fear to rescind.—That alliance of the genius of one man to the power of one man, has been long the sole hope of nations. It was that which invested with a glory, which revolutions shall never impair, the names of a Sully, and a Turgot. And should their illustrious shades rise indignant at the comparison; and should those great actors in the revolution, whom I love and reverence, raise their voices against it; yet among those names of ministers, whom genius and virtue have crowned with amaranths of immortality, will I dare to enroll *the name of a NECKAR* !

That glory was sufficiently splendid to gratify the most towering ambition, which displayed at once the lustre of genius, and the pomp of power; which, while it impressed the discerning minds of sages with reverence, taught the gladdened multitude to adore. Yet it held but the second place in the estimation of those who aspired to glory of different kinds; and who were themselves its dispensers to the rest of mankind.—The philosopher who has enlarged the bourne of human intelligence; the poet who has exhibited the master-works of human imagination; were destined to the highest seats in the temple of fame.—The great ones of the earth knew that *the MAN OF LETTERS* looked down upon them, while he cherished these sentiments in his breast: And neither their frowns nor their favours could extort any humbled confession from him. The name of SMITH effaces the names of
all

all the ministers who have ever ruled the affairs of the British empire. The glory of all the ministers of France, is eclipsed by that of MONTESQUIEU.

What man aspiring to the praise of genius, could now be ambitious of even the foremost place in the administration; since even that is happily so unimportant in the institutions of the Republic, and in the presence of the national representation? As the hand of the artisan, who frames and regulates the springs of a machine invented by Huygens or Galilæo; so labours the hand of the Minister of the Republic: There is nothing left for his genius to conceive: The duty which he has sworn to perform, is, to execute a law which he might think bad, with as strict obedience as if he thought it good. While all other citizens are at liberty freely to declare their opinions, he alone is almost always obliged to conceal his.—It should seem as if, when exalted to that honourable post, he were divested of the common rights of a man and a citizen; as if the spring of thought were stopped within him, in order that he may move only at the impulse of the thoughts of others.—We may bless those victims of which our country has need; but let them be chosen with discretion, so as not to make them too unhappy, and not to deprive the Republic of a great force of talents.—Now, the foremost places in the Republic demand only men of integrity and industry; whose minds are not too much pre-occupied with ideas; who have neither knowledge nor feelings of mind, for that glory which future times are to dispense; and who may therefore be capable of being soothed and consoled
by

by those acts of submission which are now affectingly displayed before official place, when there is nothing more to be gained by insulting its possessor.

Such are the estimable men who must henceforth be called to occupy ministerial employments. It is plain that I, when so employed, had too many *sacrifices* to make to the duties of my situation. The Republic has long been the grand object of all my meditations, and of all my hopes. But it has no place to offer me, that is not beneath my ambition.

Let them smile at this proud estimation of my own powers, which the injustice of men compels me thus to declare !—Let them cover me with that ridicule with which the vanity of all the rest may well overwhelm the pride of one !—None can hold cheaper than I, those poor productions which have been rather extorted from my necessities, than effused from my genius.—The title-deeds of my pride, if it must be so called, exist, as yet, nowhere : had I perished, they had all perished with me.—But whether this sentiment of my heart be well or ill founded ; its very existence is enough to excite in my mind, also another sentiment.—Far from losing any thing by the loss of my places ; had I retained them still, then indeed should I have been undone.

Perhaps the design may have been conceived, of absolutely ruining me, but ruining me after a different manner. So great are my misdeeds, as it should seem, that they must find among men, if not injustice, at least inexorable justice ! And then the punishment of death has not been yet abolished ! Besides, the *transporta-*

tion

tion which has been, in certain cases, substituted in its stead, is a mode of punishment, convenient, ready, and susceptible of being perfectly reconciled with all different interests!—It is highly probable that the idea may have been conceived, of ruining me by—sending me on board a transport, or bringing me to the block.—More than one warning, as well open as secret, has been given me of this, by persons who would perhaps have been not ill pleased, that I should have *transported* myself. But, on the whole, I am curious; and, whatever may be said of my mildness, in matters which are worthy of a struggle, sufficiently obstinate in my resolutions.—I wish to see, while eyes shall be left me for sight, how all this will end, in regard both to myself and others.

If condemned, I shall not, as in some republics was permitted, demand the choice of the mode of my punishment. If *transported*, it matters not to my enemies, whether I be sent to Siberia or Madagascar.—And for my own part, born under a southern sky, I have contracted a sort of necessity for the warmth of the meridian sun! I delight to contemplate nature, when pervaded and resplendent with his brightness!—If my enemies have yet any sense of pity for so feeble a being, whom they have full power to dispose of at their pleasure; I conjure them to send me to the burning shores of Madagascar, where before I walk more than a few steps, I may find the spreading shade of a banana-tree, under which to shelter my head.—If, like Diogenes, I can obtain but a cask, and if the needed radiance of the sun be not intercepted from me; I may yet be happy;

py; I may yet bless the growing mildness of the laws of the Republic.

Will they be even less compassionate than I have supposed them? And must that dreadful punishment to which so many Frenchmen were consigned by Robespierre and Billaud, which so many have endured even with gay magnanimity,—must it close the scene of my existence?—I think that I have approved myself so much the apostle of truth, that I have now no urgent occasion to offer myself as its martyr.—What was said by an ancient philosopher, is perhaps true. It is perhaps a matter of indifference whether one live or die. But this exalted indifference is not a sentiment natural to my heart—I have never striven to acquire it : I should have been afraid, in so doing, of extinguishing in my breast that rapture which the aspect of nature, and the consciousness of existence, have kindled up and kept alive in it ; that divine sentiment so benignantly inspired into the hearts of all animated nature ; which so many ungratefully slight, but which I have ever devoutly cherished,—I who have ever been passionately disposed to join the hymning chorus of all that breathes, and feels, and moves, and sings under heaven !

And yet, it is not possible for one to have for a whole year seen death descending upon so many guiltless heads, and seen it during all that time suspended by a thread over his own ; without seriously reflecting on the manner in which he might be dragged to the foot of the scaffold, on the manner in which he might make his appearance there, on the sentiments which might

fill his heart during that last act of life. If repeated experience have not acquainted my enemies with these same things in regard to themselves; should they earnestly put the question to me, I can tell them, *how* to procure from some *Section* an impressive and commanding voice of complaint, that I have not yet been brought to trial; *how*, upon the renovation of the committees, such loud and ardent hatred against me might be assumed as a good ground for proceeding against me;—*how*, in a report, it might be contrived to put my name, not at the head, but at the end of a list of other men, perhaps actually criminal;—*how*, in an elegant, even pathetic prosopopœia, might be introduced the indignant shades of those victims who have been unjustly murdered—for the purpose of demanding the life of another victim, no less innocent than they;—I should think myself perfectly able to sketch the itinerary of my route to the scaffold.

But I possess greater certainty in respect to the dispositions which such an event would find, or would call up in my soul. More than once have my lips kissed the cup. To me it has lost all its bitterness. Adored, generous shades! you whom the powers of the earth have put to death under the calumnies of unjust accusation, under the rods of the lictor, under the axe of the executioner, because you called their passions to hear the oracles of reason and of wisdom!—exposing myself to the risk of perishing by that death which you suffered; while I dared, amid a concourse of extraordinary circumstances, to imitate, in some instances, your example; my soul has

not failed to exalt itself towards the lofty elevation of yours. Amidst those blood-stained scenes through which I have passed, the sacred springs have been *revealed to me*, from which you drew that magnanimity which taught you to weep for your executioners, and to smile on the hemlock and the hatchet. I have felt the benefit of the mighty testimony of a good conscience, which all mankind, however erring, and armed against truth and virtue, cannot quash or refute. I have almost experienced that transformation, which amid every torture of punishment, renders the pure soul impassible to pain and sorrow,—rendering it incapable of any sentiments, save of the magnitude of that event which takes place upon it, in order to make virtue more august, and more interesting to the eyes of men upon earth; sentiments which present to it the prospective vision of the venerating love, the sympathetic tears, the transported admiration, with which men, when delivered from those errors which rendered them savage, must one day respect it!—Dear venerated shades! while mounting the scaffold,—and and I still between you and the earth, I should think that I saw you receive me in the midst of you, as the victim of your lessons and your example! I should think I heard my name joined with yours in those benedictions with which grateful mankind will for ever honour them: and my last sigh should be an act of thanks to the incomprehensible Author of all existence, who has given me an understanding to discern the truth, and a heart passionately to embrace it!

Supposing that it be to the executioners they have
thought

thought of intrusting the care to destroy me ; I have then reason to believe, that they might put me to death, but could not make me feel its pangs ; and that, by my punishment, at which I should assist without more feeling of pain than if a mere spectator ; they could only make me assist at my own inauguration, among those revered genii, whose images I have sometimes sketched with the pencil of history, and whom their attachment to truth has conducted to death and to immortality !

When the soul is transported with these high hopes, amid the contemplation of an illustrious death, it is painful to descend again from this elevation to the hope of life, and to find in that hope any charms. I must, however, say, that it is my firm persuasion, that no assassin, however august the title with which he may be invested,—except such as may way-lay me at the turning of a street, or the corner of a wood,—will dare to lift his hand against my life. Not in my own cares will it find its best defence ; but in the love of my enemies, for their own lives, and in the care they take of them !

The arrow which they should aim at my life, would pierce their own bosom with a mortal wound : They would not themselves long survive the day on which they should see my blood shed.

It is beautiful to proclaim those principles which can alone place men in security, mankind at peace. But if we would be protected by them, we must not only proclaim, but reverence them. Nor is it enough to respect them in favour of one's self, and one's own

friends : we must respect them, even against ourselves, and in favour of our enemies. The true principles of clemency in such a condition as ours are the articles of a peace dictated by reason, to those passions and errors which it cannot yet destroy. To be beneficent and just towards those we love, and those by whom we are beloved, is not a virtue : even tygers and wolves are capable of this. True virtue, the only social virtue, is that enlightened force, which does not rush headlong on either the side of love, or the side of hatred ; but still marching steadily forward, with the balances of reason and justice in its hands, stays the passions by its foresight, withstands personal affections by means of the discernment and the feeling of general order, and never advances without fixing bridges or banners, wherever it discovers precipices.

The time when good men might have been deceived in regard to me, is now past. The passions, of whatever character they may have been, whatever object of public good they may have had in view, have, for the space of a year, inflicted upon France unspeakable ills, from which they themselves have at last recoiled with terror. No one can henceforth expect real good from aught but wisdom, moderation, and virtue. Truth begins to dart in its rays upon us on every side. There are men capable of distinguishing it through those *sanguine clouds* amid which it is concealed, — of exhibiting it with that precision and splendour, which establish it upon a firm basis of evidence, and exalt it to the glory of triumph. There is on earth no power capable of destroying, or of clouding, those truths which

I have committed to the pages I now publish. Since they are written, they cannot perish. They are closely bound together ; and they are connected with all that has passed. The seal which I have impressed, will be less easily effaced than that of all the Republics, and of all the Chanceries in the world. My person is still in the hands of my enemies ; my memory is so no longer. Men who could not pardon me for believing, that they were equally friends to the Republic, have since embraced hand in hand to save it ; and what was called my weakness, has become the wisdom of all. I am justified, since they have mutually pardoned one another. There is one tribunal ; but it is the only one before which we must all once more appear,—the tribunal of posterity. Party-spirit, which is not the spirit of future times, may endeavour to transmit to that tribunal, its own erroneous or deceitful depositions ; but they must all perish by the way : Truth alone can descend uninjured down the stream of time. The accusations of party-spirit will then either not be heard, or will have no effect upon the judgements which posterity must pronounce, and engrave upon the tombs in which all parties shall then have been long buried. And since my name is connected with events which will interest, will terrify, will instruct posterity ; future times will not fail to have some esteem for a man, who has passed amidst all parties, yet never embraced any party, save that of the Republic, and of mankind, which was flighted by all ; who has never either asked or desired a place, yet never shrunk from those public functions which were the most environed with dan-

ger



ger and disgust ; who, offending all those passions which he strove to enlighten and disarm, has almost always forced them to own the purity of his intentions ; whom both sides have alike accused as weak, because he had the vigour to resist equally the extravagances of both, and because nothing appears so weak as reason, to minds which are transported by the passions ; who, from the very first hours of the Revolution, has been wholly devoted to it, and ever ready to seal it with his own blood, not with the blood of others,—and has formed, in regard to it, no wish, but that he may see it perfected, as it was begun, by the progress of Reason !

NOTES.



N O T E S.

The following is the detail which I promised to give of the particulars of the execution of the decree against the pillages.

THE decree was received at the Offices of the Department of Justice, *on the 1st of March, at seven o'clock in the morning.*

That same night I transmitted it to the Directory of the Department, to the Municipality, to the Criminal Tribunal. That same night the decree was printed; and on the next day, double copies were sent to the Department, to the Municipality, to the eight and forty Sections, to the eight and forty Judges of the Peace, to the six Tribunals of the District, to the Foremen of the Juries, to the Tribunal of Appeal in respect to the correctional part of the police, to the Tribunal of Commerce, to the Public Accuser to whom I wrote, recommending to him the most earnest activity.—On the 4th of March, the Criminal Tribunal of the Seine and Oise received also copies of it,—On the 3d and 4th of the same month, the Public Accuser laid before me, an account of some difficulties which had arisen in respect to the mode of receiving information against a journal, and against a deputy. I reminded him of the laws, and explained his difficulties.—I did not delay, till I received accounts concerning the conduct of the processes, and the progress they had made: I myself made inquiry, and was informed, that different directors of juries had acted upon facts
regarding

regarding the pillages, and that several of those who were accused, had been sent into confinement.—On the 17th of March, the Public Accuser communicated to me, a letter from the Judge of the Peace for the *Section du Theatre-Francois*; who had received but one deposition that afforded him any light, but required to know how he ought next to proceed.—I sent him to the laws which prescribed the conduct he ought to follow : and I did not fail to shew him my astonishment at his scruples, difficulties, and tergiversations.

The following EXTRACT is copied from the Memoir which I addressed to the Departments.

“ FROM my house the Mayor of Paris repaired to the
 “ Committee of Public Safety. I immediately fol-
 “ lowed him thither : and thence went, soon after,
 “ to wait on *the Commission of Twelve*, which had sent
 “ for me. I found there only two of its members,
 “ Vigier, and another whose name Vigier must re-
 “ collect, but I do not recollect. All the members
 “ of that Commission might think they had reason
 “ to complain of me : and Vigier was not he who,
 “ out of all the members, was the least actuated by
 “ the spirit which I had condemned.—But, amidst
 “ interests and events of such magnitude, men who
 “ are not wholly strangers to all virtue, can guess at
 “ one another’s secret sentiments. Whatever wrongs
 “ they may have mutually to complain of ; yet they
 “ unbosom themselves, and lay open their hearts to
 “ one another. Whatever the discordancy of some
 “ of their opinions ; yet they join hands, and embrace
 “ one

“ one another with perfect harmony of intentions.—
 “ I have not forgotten the conversation which then
 “ passed between us: Nor can they with whom it was
 “ held have forgotten it. We cannot have forgotten
 “ with what openness of heart we spoke; although
 “ we had not met four times before in the course
 “ of our lives.—They may well remember, how
 “ often I said to them, while I communicated all I
 “ knew, and all I could conjecture, that the decree
 “ for suppressing the Commission, had been indispen-
 “ sably necessary; that the abrogation of that decree
 “ had renewed those disturbances which the decree
 “ quieted; that the immediate suppression of the
 “ *Commission* might yet quench those torches of dis-
 “ cord which were distributed by the agitators, a-
 “ mong the people. I remember, too, how they
 “ both shewed themselves to me, to be exceedingly
 “ disposed to make any personal sacrifices which
 “ might be requisite; how often they repeated to me,
 “ that having always acted upon the purest motives,
 “ it was not the abolition of the Commission that
 “ could give them any concern, but its abolition be-
 “ fore they could obtain a hearing in regard to their
 “ conduct in it. Well! said I, obtain a hearing,
 “ then, in order to procure your speedy suppression.
 “ Our report, said one of them, will be given in on
 “ Monday.—On Monday, replied I, it will be per-
 “ haps too late. We are not sure of being able to
 “ go on till Monday. That proved to be but too
 “ true!”

